THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

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JAN 23 1941

The Week-end Review

Vol. XX. No. 513 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1940 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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L'AFFAIRE LAVAL

THE victory in Libya has heartened us all. Even if it was only the Italian army that was defeated, the victory implied good staff work. As yet few of us allow our imaginations to indulge in day-dreams over the consequences, and the wiser heads are already reminding the public that one battle (fought against Mussolini) does not make a victory over Hitler. But it was a German and not an English newspaper, the once Liberal *Frankfürter Zeitung*, that talked of Italy's "collapsing like a house of cards." And what then? The suggestion that we threw out several weeks ago is now the common subject of speculation, in Washington as in London. Is Hitler trying to find in France an ally who might take Italy's place? His needs in the Mediterranean are primarily warships and naval bases. These he could get from a sufficiently subservient France, but Marshal Pétain is not yet ready to step into the Duce's shoes, though Laval may have been trying them on. We discuss Hitler's probable moves in another article. A march on Gibraltar or a descent on Portugal are possibilities. The certainty is that his main effort will be directed against us and our shipping—already the most serious problem he has set us. Both from Washington and from Lord Beaverbrook comes the warning that we must still expect an invasion—perhaps in February.

On all this the rather mysterious events in France have an obvious bearing. No French Minister has ever been sacked with such gusto as was Laval; just how far he has been reinstated by the Germans against Pétain's will is not yet clear. Pétain made it plain in his broadcast that there was no question of resignation on Laval's part; he was dismissed "in the interests of the country" and "for higher reasons of internal policy." To add insult to injury, the Marshal proclaimed that he had cancelled the act of the constitution appointing Laval his successor. After a stormy Cabinet scene he appears to have been put under arrest. According to one report, which we should not accept without more evidence, Laval was involved in a plot with the Germans to kidnap Pétain during the ceremony at the Invalides when the body of Napoleon's son was repatriated.

In any case Laval had passed the bounds of even the Vichy Government's tolerance. He was running "co-operation with the Germans" as a private show. What this would have meant in practice is not clear, but we heard of frequent visits to Paris, where Laval conferred with the Germans, with Abetz and with Brinon. Shortly afterwards Berlin began to attack Vichy, declaring, for the benefit of the French public, that Vichy had agreed in advance to the deportation of some 5,000 French people. The stories grew: Laval was said to have dragged Pétain into meeting Hitler against the old man's will, and to have urged acceptance of Hitler's "final peace terms" against the opposition of General Huntziger and others in the Cabinet who saw that the lenient territorial clauses were a cover for the seizure of the French navy and that Germany's demand for "temporary" control of the French harbours in the Mediterranean would mean war with Great Britain.

Vichy was unwilling to go so far or join Hitler's "New Order," which Laval, who was more and more hobnobbing with full-blooded pro-Nazis like Déat and Doriot, had completely accepted. Laval likes Nazi ideology and saw in the New Order vistas of increased power for himself. He probably hoped to replace Pétain, whatever the truth about the reputed plot to kidnap him.

During these proceedings Flandin, nominated as Laval's successor, has suffered from a useful attack of real, or possibly German, influenza. His record is no better than Laval's. He wrecked the oil sanctions against Italy: he wired his congratulations to Hitler after Munich. The telegram implied: "Please remember me if and when . . . ." He alternately hated and loved the British as it suited his career. Mr. Harold Nicolson put it happily when he said that Flandin "radiates pompous malevolence." He is large, fat and self-important—the very image of the Nazi idea of a "plutodemocrat." He has lately been spouting Nazi ideas, but judging from the German reactions and the release of Laval, apparently under pressure from Abetz, he seems not to have been wholly successful in currying favour

in Berlin. In any case, he was not offered all Laval's powers; he was to be Foreign Minister, not Vice-President, press and wireless dictator or "dauphin." Whether or not he will now become Foreign Minister in more than name we do not know, because we do not know how far Hitler is now prepared to go in France. If it is a question of marching to Spain the Nazis can already do that via the west coast, which is wholly in their hands: if the object is possession of the fleet at Toulon the Vichy Government may yet put up some resistance. Berlin has been dropping dark hints that "Germany is still at war with France," and the Germans have the appalling weapon of blackmail that some two million young Frenchmen are prisoners in their hands. Vichy's one strong card, if Pétain has the courage to play it, is that the Germans do not want an anti-Nazi revolt in North Africa.

Neighbourly Help

With a brilliant but simple innovation, Mr. Roosevelt has cut through all the financial difficulties that lay ahead of us in our dealings with the United States. To use his own words, he "cuts out the dollar sign" from all future transactions. There will be no money loan, neither will there be a subsidy. But when our present orders are fulfilled and paid for, everything we thereafter need, ships, planes and munitions, will be lent to us for our use by the Government of the United States, on the understanding that we return it or replace it after the war. Mr. Roosevelt made his meaning clear by a homely illustration. He is lending his hose-pipe to a neighbour to extinguish a fire: if the pipe should be damaged, he trusts his friend to make it good when the fire has been put out. This ingenious plan will come before Congress early in January. It evades the Johnson Act, which forbade loans to States that defaulted on their debts in the last war, nor does it formally infringe the Neutrality Acts. It does not bring the United States into the war, but it is none the less as frank an affirmation of solidarity as we could desire. It will keep our industries busy, long after the war is over, in replacing these things; the less happy aspect of it is that it assumes that in the post-war world the United States will need all these destroyers, planes and munitions.

War Damage Insurance

Sooner or later, property destroyed during the war will be replaced or restored. The question was not whether there would be enough money to finance the reconstruction, but whether during and after the war labour and materials would be available for the task. In the early part of the war the Treasury, obsessed as always with the monetary aspect of economic problems, discouraged any discussion of insurance or compensation, but wiser counsels have since prevailed, and the policy of inaction described by Mr. Churchill as "financially improvident and fiscally inane"—and we would add "psychologically disastrous"—has been replaced by a considered scheme of insurance. There is much to be said, in our view, for the argument that property has no claim to income in wartime. On the fortress analogy the garrison is only entitled to income, i.e., its rations in return for service, and only the aged, the infirm and the very young would draw from the stock without making a return in labour. If all property income had been suspended for the duration, the community could have engaged in return to make restoration a first charge upon post-war budgets. This would have solved the problem of compensation and, incidentally, the disappearance of property income claims from the market would have gone a long way to solving the problem of wartime consumption and the use of resources. However, this is advanced speculation for the economics of the next war. This war is still being run as far as possible on the lines of capitalist economics, and on this principle the insurance scheme as mooted is primarily a useful addition to wartime taxation which will further cut down free purchasing power. In return the individual citizen is relieved of the uncertainty which attaches to these particular risks of war. The arrangement by which five years' premiums are to be paid for two years' cover, the first year of which has already passed with insignificant damage, tends to conceal the fact that the premium is fairly stiff, something like 2½ per cent. to 3 per cent. There are obvious anomalies in the first draft of the Bill which will doubtless be corrected by Parliament. Since property is involved, we can trust the House to be vigilant and critical in the matter.

"Reynolds News" and the Censor

Reynolds News is to be congratulated on its sturdy defence in the Censorship case. It is rightly an offence to publish matter which endangers the national security. It is not in itself an offence to publish matter which the censorship has advised would endanger the national security. This is not a distinction without a difference. At one stage in the proceedings the prosecuting counsel attempted to argue that the offence consisted in refusing to be guided by the censorship. He admitted that there was no compulsion to submit matter and no compulsion to accept the Censor's amendments, but it was an offence to refuse to be guided by the Censor. The dangers of this line of reasoning to the freedom of the press are obvious. The conclusions of the case are: that the only offence lies in publication of matter which endangers the national security; that if the Censor passes matter that is dangerous, the editor is protected by the Censor's mistake; that if the editor rejects the Censor's advice the onus will be on him to prove that the Censor was wrong and that there was no possible danger in publication. *Reynolds* was fined on one charge because a negative of this kind is difficult or impossible to prove, even though it was admitted that in all probability no harm was done.

Economic Notes (*from our Industrial Correspondent*)

The present proposal to impose a levy of 6*d.* per ton on coal is deplorable. It is not merely one more of the pernicious devices to impose taxation on the consumer (i.e., in a regressive way) outside the Budget. It means also that State subvention is once more given to this obdurate industry without State supervision or rational reorganisation. The Treasury love clandestine methods of taxation. We now tax in this undesirable manner some of our most important food, the most important raw material of the poorer classes. And here is a proposal to increase the price of the one product which enters into all production and transport. The exhortations of Ministers, bankers and experts about the avoidance of inflation sound somewhat hollow if all the consequences of this move are considered. The railroad rates will have to be raised further—in accordance with that equally celebrated agreement which all Socialist Ministers assailed in their opposition days but none was able to terminate when in office. The principle of industrial reorganisation by pooling so as to concentrate production on the most efficient units and use the man power set free for other war purposes has been generally accepted. But if such pooling takes place it must not be allowed to deteriorate into a Fascist Corporation, into private monopoly whose *raison d'être* is private exploitation and not public welfare. And, finally, if subventions are needed they must be given openly under due control.

* * *

It is really rather absurd that, whereas every argument of commonsense and war necessity points to-day to the need for a very large instalment of Socialism, there is almost nobody to press for this, except a few easily discounted intellectuals who have not got themselves caught up in the official war machine. The Labour Party organisation throughout the country, as far as I can make out, is almost entirely inactive, especially as most of its best workers are busy on A.R.P., or A.F.S., or evacuation, or some other emergency job. Meetings are very difficult, even at week-ends; and the only form of organisation that could effectively meet the situation hardly exists. I mean a division of the localities into small sections, each with a street-warden or party leader responsible for propaganda, information, and the collection and reporting of currents of local party opinion. Cannot the Labour Party, even at this late hour, attempt something of this sort? Propaganda experts have known of it ever since the 1790's as the only way of organising effectively when ordinary methods of public meeting are unavailable. It was how Thomas Hardy organised his Corresponding Societies after the French Revolution: it was used by the Radical Reformers in the 1830's, and again by the Chartists.

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THE DUCE'S FIASCO

THE victory at Sidi Barrani has opened up what may turn out to be a brilliant perspective. For the first time in this war, the Army of the Nile has won for our flag the initiative on land. That is a point in the game of prestige, but the more solid satisfaction is that we may now assume, after many months of acute anxiety, that our joint forces have won the command of the Mediterranean. This daring stroke leads us to hope that we have in General Wavell a commander of Allenby's calibre. British self-respect had suffered a heavy blow in the Norwegian campaign. Ill-prepared and ill-combined, that unhappy adventure was peculiarly damaging to the reputation of the Army's High Command. The exploit in Egypt has wiped out that miserable memory. It was evidently the fruit of long and careful preparation. It owed much of its success to the perfect team-work of land, air and sea forces. But, above all, it was a feat of scientific soldiering, which we owe to one of our few generals who has specialised in modern mechanised warfare. He achieved a surprise, of all things the most difficult in desert warfare and in these days of aerial reconnaissance. He had to overcome immense technical difficulties in a waterless land, which lacks every facility for transport. Above all, against the accepted dogma which required for the attack a superiority in striking force of three to one, he dared to take the offensive with inferior numbers. That he had to deal with a spiritless enemy may explain the ease and rapidity of his success: it does not lessen the credit of a performance distinguished by its intelligence.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that this victory was won last week. It was the culmination of a long series of efforts in which the Navy and the Air Arm had their full share—the successful transport of our reinforcements through seas which the Italians held with superior tonnage, the dazzling exploit of the Fleet Air Arm at Taranto, the sea-fight off Sardinia and the work of the Greek Army, as gallant as it is skilful. Together, all these combined forces have won the mastery of the Mediterranean. It is highly unlikely that the Italians, left to themselves, can now reinforce their armies, either in Albania or in Libya. Neither in the way of defence nor yet by reprisal can they make any effective reply to our attacks by air. At sea they appear to be unable to challenge or even to impede the movements of our Fleet. Subject once more to the qualification "left to themselves," it can be only a question of time before they lose Albania, Libya and the Dodecanese altogether. For this result we certainly have to thank the folly of Mussolini and the valour of the Greeks, but chiefly we owe it to the efficiency of our sailors and the science of General Wavell. Between them they have compensated, as few of us dared to hope they could, for the defection of the French. It is due to them and to ourselves that we should pause, grave though our anxieties still are, to speak our pride in them. This deliverance is no less a subject for thanksgiving than our survival in this island through the darkest June in its history.

But will the Italians be "left to themselves"? We assume that no sentimental consideration will in the long run influence the German High Command. It is probably true that they have always despised their junior accomplice. There is good reason to believe that Mussolini made his attack on Greece without permission, and there may even be some truth in the story now circulated by German propaganda that he was not authorised to stab France in the back last May: that is borne out by the fact that the Führer has so far assigned his jackal none of the prey. The Germans may well be watching his discomfiture with some of the pleasures of malice. But this crumbling prop is, after all, one of the pillars of the New Order. If ever a German Europe is to be built on that plan, a subject Italy is a necessary part of it, nor could the scheme take shape at all if Britain can retain the mastery of the Middle Seas. Without command of the Mediterranean the hold of the Axis would be insecure both over Spain and the Balkan Peninsula, while its road to the oil of the Middle East would be blocked. German power must have the raw materials to which these waters give access. In the Italian nation and its army the Germans may feel no keen proprietorial interest, but for their grand design Italian bases and even the Italian fleet may once have seemed useful. But as things stand to-day, that fleet is all but out of action, so heavily damaged that one may doubt whether it would be worth while to send German crews to man it. They would find our Navy with the invaluable harbours of the Greek islands at its disposal. To German strategists, therefore, the first question that presents itself must be: Is Mussolini worth saving? If it is unlikely that any expenditure of German brains and courage could now recover the command of these seas, it might very well suit these realists to leave the Duce to the fate he has by his own action brought on himself.

Their reasoning might be that they have only one enemy to consider. If they could force Britain to capitulate, they could then extort from her all they require in the Mediterranean. They could then, at their leisure, arrange in Egypt and elsewhere the outlying provinces of their New Order. This may be sound military thinking, but if the Germans adopt it, it will be because they still believe that they can obtain a decision at our expense by hunting our shipping, by battering our cities and ports, by invasion or by all these methods combined. We shall do wisely to reckon with the probability that this will be their main reply, if not their only reply, to the Italian collapse. They may do nothing dramatic at once, but they will continue their war of attrition on our shipping. They may utilise the winter to build submarines and complete their new battleships, and it is possible that they are constructing some new types of plane suggested by experience. They may be economising their oil, and they will intrigue through the subservient M. Flandin for further aid from France. No success in the Mediterranean should induce us to forget that our fate depends on our success in defending our shipping and our coasts: indeed, our chief gain from the victory over Italy may be that it should release some of our warships and planes for service in the Atlantic.

It is, however, possible that the Germans will not follow this abstract military thinking too rigidly. They may, for example, consider it worth their while to send 20,000 troops or even more by air to stiffen the Italian defence of Libya. They are, we think, less likely to assist their ally in Albania. For in the Balkans they are feeling increasingly the pressure of Russian opposition. Moscow is now encouraging both Turkey and Bulgaria to maintain a vigilant neutrality. It is evidently her policy to use all diplomatic means to keep this Peninsula out of the war, or rather to limit the war to Albania. How much she would risk for this policy we do not know, and the same uncertainty may exist in the minds of the Germans. Combined with the unfriendly weather, this consideration may impose inaction in that region on Hitler's armies. Neither of these factors would forbid the despatch of officers, planes and air-borne troops to North Africa. There, however, another uncertainty might come into play. How would its French garrison, under the balancing General Weygand, respond to such a move? If the Germans do risk any Southern move at all we should expect it rather in Spain, for this would help their war on our shipping.

Events will soon answer these questions. They are complicated, however, by other factors even harder to estimate. That Mussolini's prestige is shaken at home, no one doubts. He had taught this docile yet quick-witted nation to build all its hopes on the restoration of the Roman Empire. That dream is gone for ever: even if Hitler could rescue Italy, he would not now reward her with any appreciable share in the loot. Every Italian must, therefore, be asking why he should help to prolong a useless and inglorious war. Time has not yet given solidity to this nation's traditions. The national idea has barely a century behind it and the present régime is an upstart. The army was never at ease under the domination of the Fascist Party and it must resent the behaviour of the Duce in flinging on its chiefs the blame for these disasters. The Church had, indeed, made its peace with Fascism, but it liked the present war and the alliance with the Nazis no better than the army or the people. The King is little more than a prisoner. The Duce in this situation stands to-day where he stood when he marched on Rome in 1922. He has his Blackshirts behind him and that is all. Then he came with bright promises to a people that could not foresee the gradual tightening of its chains. For it to-day a dark present opens on an inglorious future. We must assume that the Blackshirts will stand firm. They have their careers to defend: they have made enemies by their spying and their favouritism: they stand to lose heavily by any change of régime. It is noteworthy that both in Libya and Albania, as formerly in Spain, the Fascist Militia has fought relatively well. It will not go under without a struggle, and it is probable that danger will give it unity and cohesion. Some observers of this puzzling situation believe that the army may revolt. That is doubtful, for it never had much sense of its own separate existence: there is not in Italy a military caste. The old parties of the Left—the Socialists, the Republican Liberals and the Catholic Popolari—are shattered by persecution and decimated by exile. Their few conspicuous leaders are abroad and their underground organisations are only a nucleus. They have courage, however, and at such moments it is to the few who have not bent the knee that the masses turn. In Italy, even sooner than in France, our chance may come to aid a democratic *risorgimento*. If the Italian people dare to throw off Mussolini's yoke

it is to our thinking as improbable as it would be deplorable, that they should turn for leadership to any of his lieutenants. This was a dirty régime alike in its police oppressions and in its financial corruptions. When the yoke breaks, Italy will look for freedom under men of character. We wish we could believe that our Government were awake to these chances. It should even now be seeking out the democratic exiles and helping them as our fathers helped the makers of Italy. It should be planning on a not too distant day the landing in Garibaldi's footsteps in Sicily of a modern Thousand. But is there a Garibaldi?

BEVIN'S LEAD

"My war aims," said Mr. Bevin at the Rotary Club lunch, "are summed up in the phrase—The motive of our life should be social security." He went on to declare that we should not be led into the mistakes we made in the last war of merely indulging in high-flown platitudes about homes for heroes or things of that kind simply to stimulate the people. Now is the time when thoughtful people ought to be considering the real social implications of the war. We failed to recognise that the last war was largely, as indeed this one is, a great civil war to determine whether we are to be ruled from the top or have government responsible to the peoples. The last 20 years had demonstrated that security cannot be obtained by arms. It can only be obtained by the enthronement of power with the people. Unemployment had been the devil that had driven masses in large areas of the world to turn to dictators. "I want," said Mr. Bevin, "to give you the new motive for industry and for life. I suggest that at the end of this war, and indeed during the war, we accept social security as the main motive of all our national life. The whole of our economy, finance, organisation, science and everything must be directed to social security, not for a small middle class or for those who may be the mere possessors of property; but for the community as a whole." Get rid of that horrible queue outside the labour exchanges or stop the whole educational system. Better leave the masses untaught than give them a double appetite both of stomach and head and then not satisfy either. Mr. Bevin continued:

> "I am afraid that at the end of the war, unless the community is seized with the importance of this, you may well slip into the most revolutionary action, though," he added with blunt candour, "I don't mind revolutions if they are well directed." And finally, "You have got to offer a new feeling of hope, and example is better than precept. If this old country would begin to shape and direct it now and begin to weave it into its own economic life while the present struggle is going on, that would be the best answer to Hitler. I feel in my very bones that somehow things can never be as they were. A new age has to be built, and what greater contribution can we pay to those who are suffering at this moment than to say that this time it is really not in vain."

We pay Mr. Bevin the sincere compliment of believing that he has the courage and the will to strive for this goal of social security. Since these remarks he has suggested one tangible measure which would go some way to fulfilling it. He suggests a pensions scheme to reduce the hard core of the unemployed. He spoke of devising a form of payment which would take these men off the books and give them the status of veterans of industry. He might go further and introduce and apply the principle of a standard and substantial pension which would remove the fears of old age. Why not a pledge to increase the Old Age Pension within twelve months of the end of the war to 30*s.* per week for single persons and 50*s.* per week for married couples?

Before the war Labour members used to remark on what they regarded as a curious phenomenon. After they had treated their constituents to an elaborate disquisition on the international situation and had presented it as the crucial issue of the times, when question time came the subject that almost monopolised attention was the demand for a substantial increase in the Old Age Pension. One member prided himself on the fact that he had the courage to return an emphatic "No" to this demand. Poor fellow, he flattered himself that he had learned the lesson of 1931. Never again would his party be associated with reckless finance. It would establish a reputation for orthodoxy and caution in these matters. Snowden was the great exemplar. He knew how to draw cheers from the City. What lay behind this urgent and pathetic demand was not within the province or the imagination of our member.

What does lie behind it? It is not a local phenomenon. In the United States—the richest country in the world—there has been a profusion of pension schemes some of which have swept individual states like wildfire. Most of them have been laughed out of court by the pundits who always read the Sermon on the Mount in the light of actuarial tables.

> All the mills will turn their wheels, the factories will run,
> Youth will find activity and work that must be done,
> Older folks can take their ease and have their bit of fun,
> And will be grateful to Townsend.

To the tune of *Marching Through Georgia*, forty thin and quavering old voices struggle through the Townsend Plan "Recovery Song." Damn funny, but a useful theme for a light and witty article explaining that Mr. X, a typical member of the audience, is a simple-minded man who knows nothing about economics. "He is the kind of country fellow who flocked into greenbackism, populism and the 16-to-1 movement in earlier hard times. Mr. X believes that anything is possible. When he was younger he used to go to country fairs and bet he could tell which thimble the pea was under. What Mr. X wants is a good big federal pension, paid to him as a matter of right and not of charity. His leaders have worked out a philosophy to justify his demand. He has spent his life in hard productive labour building up the wealth of the country and is entitled to 'dividends' in the form of a monthly annuity which will keep him in comfort for the rest of his days. He contends that it is 'unscriptural' for old people to be left in want in a country when there is plenty for all if it were 'justly' distributed. Let economists explain that the proposed taxes, if they did not wreck all business and employment, would produce a fantastic inflation; let welfare workers emphasise that 'crackpot' schemes only mean an unfair burden on the producing groups of society, let political experts point out the danger to democratic institutions in the existence of a bloc of millions in one age group, Mr. X brushes all such questions aside and a hard look comes into his old eyes. He still thinks he can guess which thimble the little pea is under."

Thus our witty writer who knows exactly how many beans make a gold standard. The economists, the welfare leaders and the political experts have told him that, but what they do not explain and do not seem to understand is why the dismissed clerk of fifty waits until his wife has sobbed herself to sleep and then goes quietly into the bathroom to cut his throat. In 1931, there were millions of potential Mr. Xs in Germany who turned in despair to the man who held out some "crackpot" hope for the future. At such times the human race in desperation would turn to the ape tribe for a saviour.

Mr. Bevin knows why the masses turned to the dictators, but your witty puncturer of "crazy" pension schemes knows that it is all explained by the pea-and-thimble trick. He knows where the pea is every time. In 1931 he proved that that £20 millions more instead of less unemployment relief would break the system. After that if anyone suggested an addition of £50 millions to the Budget for pensions he riddled the proposition fore and aft. In 1937 he proved that rearmament could only be safely financed by a deficit, and now he is arguing that at least £4,000 millions per annum must and can be spent on war purposes. He also proves that this cannot be raised by taxation and supports a borrowing programme which may add £100 millions or £200 millions to the service of the National Debt. After the war he will of course prove that the debt service not only rules out any increase in the social services, but peremptorily calls for a summary decrease.

What are the simple facts of human psychology in this matter? It is not the contemporary privation attendant upon hard times that renders the worker bitter and despairing: it is the uncertainty for the long years ahead. Why has there been such abhorrence of the Means Test? What are the Means in question? They are the savings painfully and slowly accumulated out of small incomes, the traditional defence against the workhouse and the paupers' grave. The middle and upper classes who panicked in 1931 because of a remote and trivial threat to their economic security cannot understand why the unemployed worker should not proudly eat up his £150 accumulation and then sue *in forma pauperis*. These workers neglect their health, stint their homes, and forgo scholarships for their children in order to hang on to the little nest-egg for their old age. We believe that the hardship of toil and the horrors of unemployment would be immensely alleviated if people were assured that at the end of the journey there was a safe haven. We even believe that there would be a saving on the intermediate social services if the last social service were generous and secure. The workers would spend more on their health of their own accord, they would spend more on their childrens' education and upbringing, they would be more mobile and take more chances in a rapidly changing economic environment if they knew that at 65 they would be independent in their own right. What people will endure if there is an ultimate prospect of relief can be judged by their behaviour in wartime. They are holding out for

the peace. They are fighting to end fighting. If it were not for the prospect of peace the present miseries would be unendurable. A striking example is afforded in peacetime by those rash young people who engage for a bet or a challenge to start a world tour with 6*d.* in their pockets. They do coolie work and endure incredible hardships, because at the bottom they are sustained by the knowledge that in the last resource they can appeal to a consul and that ultimately they will return to ease and comfort. May not the French debacle be partly explained by the fact that this race which notoriously works hard for the day when it can retire to cultivate a few beans and indulge in a little fishing has found itself cheated for the last quarter of a century by continuous depreciation of its savings? It wasn't worth fighting for a system which bilked the toiler of his final reward.

Who will oppose this scheme for the universal and generous support of old age? First of all the professional economists, all of whom are protected themselves by superannuation funds. They will explain patiently that larger pensions can only come with larger production. It does not occur to them to ask whether the provision of generous pensions might not result in increased production because of the fundamental change in the outlook and attitude of the workers. They never seem to ask what difference it makes to their own work that they are assured for their old age. Then there are the Treasury experts, again handsomely protected by pension rights and security of tenure. The leaders of business can carry their own endowments for old age, but even so they are never thrown on the streets at fifty by rationalisation schemes. "Compensation for loss of office" sets them up at Bournemouth or on the Riviera for the rest of their days. Do the bishops trust that the Lord will provide and that in an emergency the ravens will feed them? They take care that the Lord has to work through the episcopal pension fund.

Most of these leaders of opinion and determiners of policy will harp on the danger that the worker with 30*s.* a week at sixty-five dangling before his eyes will just bum his way through life. A dangerous argument. It argues against life appointments and superannuation rights for professors of economics lest they should bum their way for thirty years on the same lecture notes. It argues against the whole Civil Service system of tenure, and by Heaven! the permanent officials of the Foreign Office and the War Office are lucky to be pensioned by contract and not by bonus on the results of the past twenty years. It argues *a fortiori* against the institution of inheritance since if a man will bum at the prospect of a fortune at sixty-five he will bum on a safe income received at twenty-one.

No doubt there are plenty of objections to the view of life which puts social security first. Mr. Bevin will himself agree that it is by no means all that we have to work for, not in itself a solution of many problems of social welfare. But the objections, as we have remarked, are apt to come from comfortable people who want the poor to "live dangerously" and see decadence in a security which they have taken good care to achieve for themselves. Mr. Bevin is on good ground if he tells the workers frankly that we shall all have to work hard to repair the ravages of war, that no paradise can be promised for the working life of the citizen, but that security will come at the end of toil. On good ground, that is, if he pushes through to achievement the security scheme he has so eloquently formulated. PARAS

A LONDON DIARY

A RESPONSIBLE post at the Ministry of Information is rather like one of those impossible "labours" set by mythological kings to talented people with whose presence they wished tactfully to dispense. The Director-Generalship of the Ministry of Information is a regular dragon of an appointment. So far it has proved a safe way of swallowing-up the best of reputations. Mr. Frank Pick went into the job with a high reputation as an imaginative administrator; he has left after an unhappy struggle and a first-class row with the Minister. His gifts were real, and in calmer waters they would have taken him through in spite of an astonishing abruptness of manner and an even more surprising ignorance of everything to do with the subject matter of politics and public opinion. Like his predecessors, Mr. Pick early discovered that the Director-General of the M. of I. cannot be a mere administrator. He began by promising drastically to cut down staff, and soon discovered that he had to sanction large recent additions to it. He soon became involved in controversies about war aims and morale and other incalculable subjects, which refused to run to time-table like trains or to fit the categories of his own Asquithian Liberalism. His difficulties were not lessened by an unfortunate experience of bombs, which followed him from one house to another and then descended on the hotel in which he took refuge. On one matter he was certainly right. He could see no sense in the division between policy and planning. How can you have a plan, he asked, without a policy; and that went to the root of the whole matter. Until the Cabinet decides what its policy is, no Minister or staff can succeed. The high-ups in the Ministry, if they have any ideas of their own, are bound to differ, to stultify each other and to submit to the dictation of the Service departments unless they have Cabinet directives whose authority decides disputed points. For that reason, and for no other, I am not altogether happy about Sir Walter Monckton's appointment. We cannot afford to have him, too, swallowed by the dragon. He begins with the immense asset of experience and popularity in the Ministry. He gets on famously with the press and with his staff. It was like him to address a charming letter to all the principal members of his staff on the day of his appointment. He is sane, highly intelligent and sympathetic. I only hope he is also tough enough to deal with the dragon.

* * *

Amongst those nominated by the press to succeed Lord Lothian at Washington I note the following: The Duke of Windsor, Lloyd George, Halifax, Samuel, Duff Cooper, Sir Robert Vansittart, Eustace Percy, Sir Walter Layton, Eden, Beaverbrook, Sir Walter Citrine, Lord Cranborne, Lord Harlech and Sir Archibald Sinclair. Here is a good round game. Remembering that the appointment will be made by Mr. Winston Churchill in consultation with Mr. Roosevelt, give reasons, in turn, for the rejection or acceptance of each of these nominations. If all are turned down (the names at the end of the list are in my view the least unlikely), suggest other more eligible names not yet thought of by the press. Your friends will find good reasons against these. Game to be continued until the company, and the pages of *Who's Who*, are exhausted.

* * *

A friend, who agrees with my remarks last week about the unsuitability of Sir Francis Lindley as Chairman of an aliens' tribunal, points out that he was selected before Mr. Morrison became Minister of Home Security. The original tribunal consisted of Sir Francis Lindley, Mr. Kirkpatrick and Mr. Havers, K.C. Mr. Morrison greatly improved this committee by adding the appropriate names of Margery Fry and Mr. Jarman of the National Union of Seamen. But I stick to my point. In a war against Fascism, the Chairman and members of a tribunal to examine refugees from Fascist regimes should themselves, whatever their political party, be on record as opponents of Fascism. It may have been awkward, but I think Mr. Morrison should have completely reconstituted this tribunal. There have been alien tribunals in this country who have regarded a long record of struggle against Fascism as a black mark against the applicant! I recall a case of a German Social Democrat who appealed against internment, giving indisputable testimony that he had risked his life in Germany and Spain against the Nazis. After gravely considering the evidence for a minute, the Chairman of the tribunal asked: "But on what ground do you appeal for release?" The unfortunate refugee, who had heard a rumour that Britain was fighting against the Nazis, was so bewildered that he could think of nothing more to say. His appeal was refused. And yet what more was there to say? I hold that any man who does not see the tragic mockery of that story and who does not regard it as a disgrace to England in her finest hour, is not fit to sit on an aliens' tribunal.

* * *

The Minister of Home Security has a difficult life; no one is so much shot at and from so many directions. Mr. Morrison was right, when questioned about the detentions under 18B, in saying that we could not fight this, or any other war, on the principles of nineteenth-century Liberalism. But that does not mean that we need fall into the opposite extreme of *lettres de cachet* and *oubliettes*, nor that Mr. Morrison should be "fed up," as he put it, by questions that so vitally affect the most elementary liberties. Tory and Labour Members united to express very proper suspicions that people who were imprisoned in the summer—usually, I believe, for good reasons—have not been given a proper hearing within a reasonable time and that they are being kept in a solitary confinement which is now supposed to be foreign to our whole penal system, even in the case of convicted prisoners. Special measures for swift action were justified last summer; precautions should be taken against plotting in gaol, but the right to a speedy and judicial hearing and to decent treatment during detention were not abrogated and their observance constitutes no danger to national security. We have the more right to be suspicious because of the lamentable mistakes which Mr. Morrison admits have been made in the recent past by his department.

Thousands of people must now be wanting accurate information about the Near East. Where are all these towns that are captured or that may be captured soon? Where is the oil in the Near East which Germany will need all the more after the accident of an earthquake and the perhaps less accidental damage of some unexplained explosions in Rumania? What are the treaties and relations between Turkey, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia? These and similar questions are answered with remarkable detail and objectivity in a *Note on the Near East*, published by the Union of Democratic Control (32 Victoria Street, S.W.1). It is a modest description of a remarkable threepennyworth of up-to-date information, which gives the background both of the Greek and the Egyptian campaigns. The U.D.C. is nowadays a modest body which deserves far more support than it gets. Its statement about "war aims" was the best basis for discussion we have seen published, and its pamphlet *Why France Fell: The Lesson for Us* is the ablest yet written on the French collapse.

* * *

Another body which has continued to think in spite of the war is the National Peace Council, which appointed a group of well-known people regularly to consider problems of the peace settlement and post-war reconstruction. The earlier sessions of this conference produced a symposium to which G. D. H. Cole, Norman Angell, Barbara Wootton and Norman Bentwich contributed (N.P.C., 1s.). The National Peace Council is now organising a week-end conference at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, January 10th–13th. Professor Laski will be speaking on social policy in relation to war aims, Ritchie Calder and Dr. H. G. Wood on the fundamental principles of post-war settlement, Señor Madariaga and Professor E. H. Carr will discuss international policy, and P. W. Martin and Wilfred Wellock will deal with economic aspects. Other speakers are Sir Richard Acland and Dr. C. E. M. Joad. The National Peace Council, by the way, publishes a useful monthly bulletin, edited by Robert Donnington. It brings together in a small compass a mass of material not otherwise easily accessible. Recent issues have summarised the fascinating variety of opinions on the subject of peace aims expressed in all sorts of quarters. One gets the impression that everybody who ever says anything about anything has now staked out a claim. One of the most useful issues of the bulletin dealt with the controversy in the U.S.A. about sending food to the supposedly starving people of Europe—a matter about which, in view of Germany's counter-blockade, much more realistic thinking would be welcome on both sides of the Atlantic.

* * *

In thousands of homes relatives of prisoners of war in enemy hands are in great distress of mind concerning the treatment of these prisoners. What is the truth about this? Some people obsessed with propaganda seem consciously or unconsciously to hope that the treatment is bad, and some papers play up every unconfirmed rumour and story. Such exaggeration is an outrage on the feelings of the unhappy relatives. I know what the Nazis are capable of in the treatment of helpless captives, but it may be that in their own interests they are conforming to the standards prescribed by international convention. If this is so relatives and the general public should be assured at once. Information has just been received from the International Red Cross which gives some comforting assurance on certain points. The parcel situation is still far from satisfactory, and it is to be hoped that the new route of despatch now proposed will work better. The War Office has made some confusing statements about this problem and after its lamentable exhibition in the treatment of internees in this country it is very suspect both as a source of information and as a judge in this matter.

* * *

Among the innumerable bomb stories going round I select this as one of the best—particularly because it was told me by the employer in whose works it actually happened. A German aeroplane had been brought down whole in the area. It was decided to display it in aid of the Spitfire Fund. A canvas awning was placed round it. On the morning of the day when the exhibition was to be opened two of the workmen decided to have a free view and crept under the canvas. A foreman saw them come out and asked what they were doing. "Oh," they said, "having a pre-view as it were." They went on to say that it was an excellent show. They particularly liked the large bomb so realistically placed by the Messerschmitt. "What are you talking about," asked the foreman. "There's no bomb. You are seeing things." The men stuck to their point, until the foreman in alarm investigated. There was a bomb. It had fallen during the night and lay, unexploded, by the plane.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Julian Huxley.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Lord Rosebery, speaking at the annual meeting of the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association at Newmarket last night, said that he did not think that the necessity for racing was generally realised outside the circle of owners and breeders.—*Times.*

Boy and girl friendships should not be tolerated by Catholic parents; they not only rob young girls of that modesty and that reserve which is the charm of their sex and age but they are positively dangerous. To shrink from corporal punishment in these circumstances is not a sign of love; rather it is a sign of weakness and blindness to the child's earthly and eternal welfare.—Pastoral letter of the Bishop of Salford, quoted in *Manchester Guardian.*

One small town in the Home Counties has a siren which obstinately refuses to "moan" for an alert. That does not greatly worry the A.R.P. people. As they can't make it "moan" they wait until the "raiders passed" signal is received, and let it give the "all clear." The arrangement, I am told, is regarded as quite satisfactory by all concerned.—*Daily Dispatch.*

Looting is an ugly word, unfortunately prominent at the moment. It goes on daily on the railways, where first-class-fare-paying passengers are deprived of what they have paid for by the occupation of their accommodation, as if by right, by third-class-fare-paying passengers. "The war" is made the excuse.—Letter in *News Chronicle.*

When Isodore Eker, of Manor Way, Chesham, Bucks, went to business his Austrian maid used his radio set, and at Chesham yesterday Eker was fined £5 for aiding and abetting an enemy alien to use such apparatus contrary to the Defence Regulations.—Daily papers.

The Resident Magistrate, putting Hinds on probation, advised the probation officer to see that the boy was taught that there was a God. It was really shocking to hear a well-dressed boy say that he did not know his religion, and to hear the mother's admission that he was too big to go to church. "You would think you were living in Russia," declared Mr. Campbell.—*Belfast Telegraph.*

THE BREAKDOWN OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE REMEDY

WHEN Birmingham ordered an inquest on its A.R.P. arrangements, it would have been proper to add "and on Local Government." For the disclosures at the Special Council Meeting last week, which was summoned because of the breakdown and the need for drastic reconstruction, were symptomatic. The stories which one heard not only from the Labour members who had forced the issue but from the Tory benches of the treatment of the homeless, of the conditions in the shelters, of "haven't-they-got-tongues-in-their-heads" indifference to the plight of raid victims, and of general muddle were a repetition of the tribulations of East London.

It was more than exasperating to me; it was mortifying because in immediate aftermath of Birmingham's blitz, I had taken the arrangements at their face value. I had been assured by a responsible authority that "Birmingham had practically no homeless problem." I had been impressed, as Mr. Herbert Morrison had been, by the hostel plan, whereby those families which could not find billets or new homes immediately would be housed communally, with family privacy but with joint feeding and recreational facilities. There was even to be a nursery for the children. It was grand.

The Home Secretary thought so and commended the idea as an example to the whole country. But the one he saw was a "show-piece"; it was the only one which then existed. Nevertheless, I was told on the day after the blitz that "many homeless were being housed in our hostels." When the Council met last week only three existed. Five others were on the way. That was something short of the 200 big houses which the Labour Party insisted should be commandeered and turned into hostels.

Defending himself against attacks from all quarters of the Council, Councillor Norman Tiptaft, chairman of the A.R.P. Committee, assured the meeting that that morning, fourteen days after the major attack, there were no homeless left in the rest centres. He might have added that only one in six homeless families had been housed through the agency of the municipality. The rest were either in billets of their own finding or with friends, or in lodgings in big houses grabbed by lodging speculators (and not commandeered by the Council) and "roomed" at enormous profit, or left like stray animals, in the shelters.

My only excuse for being "had" is that I assumed that Birmingham, home of Joe Chamberlain's great experiments in Local Government, pioneer of municipal enterprise, model, so it seemed, for Local Government not only for Britain but for the world, would surely be the exception. Surely if any municipality could carry the burdens imposed on it by war measures, Birmingham could do so.

It did not. The measure of its failure was the hurried acceptance by the leader of the Tories of such demands by Labour as: the requisitioning of all suitable vacant houses; an inquiry into the alleged delay in dealing with the homeless; the consideration of a policy for the construction of new air-raid shelters not excluding deep, bomb-proof shelters for the central areas (Tiptaft off his own bat had renounced all communal shelter development); provision of medical services for all large shelters; survey of all shelters in the city and requisitioning of works shelters at night, where possible; consideration of a scheme for the evacuation of mothers and children under five. In most of these details Birmingham is even behind the worst districts of London.

One thing of which I was convinced in listening to the exposures was that here again, Local Government had been unequal to its war-time task. Birmingham, with its tradition of good peace-time administration, had failed just as abjectly as the poorest London boroughs. It was not so much an indictment of Birmingham as of the Anderson Plan of farming out the heavy responsibilities of Civil Defence to administrations never devised for such tasks. If conditions in Stepney demanded the heavy hand of Central Authority, what about Birmingham?

That is a grave challenge. I suggest, however, that it is a test case on this whole question of the adequacy of the existing system of Local Government under war conditions. Indeed, I ought not to qualify it with "under war conditions" because it has a direct bearing on Post-war Reconstruction. National Planning, even in the physical sense, will be impossible if we tolerate the existing definitions of Local Government and municipal boundaries.

Apart from the homeless muddles, consider also the Lewis Carroll position of the A.R.P. services. In the London area, Borough boundaries are administrative illusions, invisible in the conglomeration of bricks and mortar. Borough boundaries march down the middle of roads, dodge up side streets and waltz round buildings. Yet each Borough has its independent A.R.P. services.

Wardens of one Borough patrol the pavements on one side of the street. Their rivals patrol the other. It can happen that the wardens of, for example, St. Pancras can see an exposed light high up in a tall building opposite—in Holborn—but the Holborn wardens under the lee of the building cannot. The St. Pancras wardens would be committing an act of aggression, invading Holborn's territory, if they crossed the street and warned the offender. Perhaps a bellow across the boundary of "Put out that light" might provoke a severe exchange of diplomatic notes between the Foreign Secretaries of the two Boroughs.

It often happens that the bomb falls in the middle of the boundary street. That is a matter for arbitration and serious arguments as to whether the crater bulges more to one side or the other. "Incidents" which have occurred on disputed territory have led to further incidents between the rival A.R.P. services as to who shall deal with it. Wardens of one Borough, for instance, rushed to a bombed hotel close to their post. It was in the neighbouring Borough. There were injured inside, and the wardens considering, not unreasonably, that humanity came before Borough privileges, went to the rescue. They did not know the 'phone number of the nearest First Aid Post in the other Borough but their own First Aid services came on the scene and had done the job before the proper wardens arrived. There was hell to pay! One of London's biggest incidents, destroying buildings on two corners of a street, involved three different local authorities. Perhaps they tossed up as to which should handle it!

Just as ridiculous is the position in certain Tube stations used as shelters. Some are in two Boroughs; several in three. That is to say, the invisible boundary penetrated sixty or a hundred feet or more below ground. Surveys have to be made as to where the line crosses the platforms. Then the Medical Officers wrangle as to who should be responsible for the lavatories or the First Aid Posts or the medical staff. And while they argue intolerable conditions may exist.

Even in the life-or-death Casualty Services this confusion of authority prevails. The Socialist Medical Association has spoken out vigorously on the subject. It has demanded unification under a rational, regional organisation, with powers to lay down policy which may be modified to local conditions. It has shown how democratic principles can be both maintained and improved by reorganisation.

Imagine what would happen if, in the midst of battle, the pilot was taking his instructions from the R.A.F., the navigator from the Navy and the gunner from the Army. Yet that is what happens in Casualty Services. The Rescue Parties are under the District Engineer, the Stretcher Parties and the First Aid Posts are under the Borough Council, the ambulances are under the L.C.C. and the Casualty Clearing Stations under the Ministry of Health. None can give instructions to the others. So the Stretcher Parties, taking over from the Rescue Parties, carries the victim to the L.C.C. ambulance, whose driver already has his own instructions and will take the case to his prescribed First Aid Post, although that particular one may be overworked and the next one slack. Later the patient is handed over to the Ministry of Health.

Again the same studious regard for the sanctity of lichen-covered institutions dictated that the homeless services should be handed over to the Public Assistance Committees. The poor who had lost their homes were thought of as "casuals" rather than as "casualties." Anyway the Poor Law taint meant misery to those who had spent a thrifty life trying to avoid it. The L.C.C. were quick to allay this unnecessary wretchedness by calling its P.A.C.'s war functions "Emergency Food and Rest Services."

Now, praise be, it has perpetuated this change. It has banished Bumble. It decided on Tuesday, December 17, 1940 that hereafter there would be no more "P.A.C." in peace or war. Its P.A.C. has become "The Social Welfare Committee" and its relieving officers "Social Welfare Officers" and it is asking the Minister for Health to make the necessary alteration in the Administration Scheme.

Out of its ordeal Coventry also has produced something which may have lasting as well as wartime importance. That is "The National Emergency Committee." Since my "Interim Report on Coventry" in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, I have probed deeper into the pre-blitz arrangements there. They were far from satisfactory; but let us omit recrimination. For whatever the City's previous shortcomings, the fact was that "Coventrating" meant that the nerves and sinews and muscles of local government were wrenched and lacerated. It was an earthquake situation and without standing upon niceties of demarcation, the Ministry of Health, the Regional Commissioner, the War Office, the Ministry of Home Security, the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Labour and all the neighbouring authorities rushed in to save the City.

The result was the "National Emergency Committee."

The shot-gun marriage of State and Local Government begat a new kind of administration, and I suggest that in this we have a basis for a fresh orientation of Local Government, suited not only to war emergencies but to post-war reconstruction.

Contrast this genuine method of reorganisation with the "Regional Commissioner" who embodies in himself the combination of Ministries. He is superimposed on Local Government. He is a grafting which is not fed by the blood-vessels of the organism of Local Government democracy.

When Mr. Herbert Morrison said at Cardiff that in the Regional System there were possibilities of changes in local government after the war, one assumes that he did not mean the return to the Feudalism of the Heptarchy, which is more or less what the Regional Commissioner system means, but that he saw it integrated in new democratic institutions of Local Government.

But why, in the name of Hitler's Luftwaffe, defer it until after the war? Why not face up to the challenge of Birmingham and Stepney and make, as a wartime emergency, necessary changes now? Why not put Local Government into the battle-dress of the People's War, instead of the kepis of 1888? We can tailor its "civvies" later.

The bombers have no respect for boundaries. The homeless overflow the narrow limits of existing local authorities. The fire brigades and other Civil Defence services of a whole area rush in when a district is stricken. Regional Local Government exists in practice if not in principle. But the practice is crude and liable to abuse. Innumerable difficulties and an immense amount of misery could be avoided by the existence of overriding Regional Welfare Boards, up-growth of Local Government, not down-growth of the State, and the extension of Mutual Aid to more than the Civil Defence services, through something on the model of Coventry's National Emergency Committee.

These would not be merely wartime expedients. They would be the moulds of the reorganisation of Local Government after the war. They would prepare for the adjustments which will be necessary for National Planning and the location of industry and the shaping of the twentieth-century Britain.

Some see in regionalism the loss of contact with the individual.

A regional representative would seem as remote as an M.P. But the war has given us smaller units even than the Ward—through the street warden and the "Mr. and Mrs. Sensibles." If the peacetime equivalents of these were elected and formed the Ward Committee, to keep vigilant watch on immediate local needs, if in turn there were District Councils and Area Councils, just as in Education we have School Management Committees and Local Education Committees, and if thus the democratic machine went beyond the County Council scope to the Regional Council, local democracy would be revitalised.

The return to the Ward as the cell of the democratic organism is, I feel, essential. "Village-life" is real even in the midst of London's bricks and mortar. It may centre on the pub at the corner, or the grocer's shop or some popular figure, but that block of streets is as much an entity as Little Muddlecombe to people who may scarcely know, except when they pay their rates, whether they live in Stepney or Poplar or St. Pancras or Marylebone.

Regionalism is not new. Experts on Local Government have examined the problems. The Royal Commission on Tyneside and the recent Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population were emphatic for it. National sentiment for Scottish or Welsh Self-Government (and the Labour Party is committed to both) can be saved from rabid Nationalism by wise interpretation of Regionalism.

If the Government goes on dodging the realities and waiting until a Council becomes administratively bankrupt for the excuse to put in a Controller, as though he were a bailiff, Local Government may be discredited. If it deals imaginatively and constructively with the difficulties, it can improve Civil Defence and, at the same time, shape the design of Post-war Reconstruction. RITCHIE CALDER

BRITAIN CAN TAKE IT

NIGHT-RAIDING bombers rain
Death and destruction,
Britain builds up again,
Speeds war production;
White-hot her purpose glows,
Nothing can shake it,
Hardened by hammer blows
Britain can take it.

Hark to the Treasury
Calling up War Loans,
War Bonds for victory,
More loans and more loans,
Every pound they will spend
Fast as we make it,
No matter *what* we lend
Britain can take it.

Railways are all employed
Serving the nation,
Doubling fares to avoid
Vicious inflation;
Transport's full steam ahead,
Nothing can brake it,
Well have the Railways said,
"Railways can take it."

Will there be price control?
At the first rumour,
Corner the market whole,
Skin the consumer;
Britons on Britons prey,
Never mistake it,
Britain must pay and pay,
Britons will take it.

Britain can only win
Through sacrifices,
Vast the war effort in
Piling up prices;
Once they have heard the call
None will forsake it,
There is no doubt at all
Britons can take it.

SAGITTARIUS

AN ADVENTURE ON THE VOLGA

A SMALL group of Soviet workers on holiday received a bad mental shock on account of a certain misunderstanding.

This is how it happened. It is a real fact.

When we settled down after the Revolution and the beautiful pleasure steamers resumed their trips up and down the Volga, a small group of Soviet citizens—six office workers, including myself—started off for a rest holiday on the river.

Everyone advised us to take a trip on the Volga for the reason that it provided an excellent rest. Nature, view of the banks, and of the river. And, of course, food and cabin accommodation. All these things, together with the first-class cabins and the serving of hot food to passengers, were restored at the same time as the steamer service on the Volga.

And so the group of office workers, fatigued by the strains and stresses of revolutionary work, started off for a refreshing holiday.

Our luck willed it so that we picked on to a first-rate really marvellous steamer, the name of which was *Comrade Penkin*. We were rather interested to know who this Comrade Penkin was. We were told that he was, probably, some sort of Water Transport worker.

To be quite frank, it did not make much difference to us, and we, of course, took our tickets and departed on this little-known *Comrade Penkin*.

We arrived at Samara and went, as a group, to visit the town. As we were walking about the town, we suddenly heard steamer whistles from the river.

One of us said:

"Time-tables are not too accurate nowadays. What if our *Penkin* leaves before its time? Let us go back."

So we hurried over our examination of the town and returned to the landing stage.

But as we came up, we saw that our steamer was no longer there. It had gone.

Naturally, the party got rather excited. There was some shouting and screaming.

One man shouted: "I left my papers aboard in my trouser pocket." Others cried out: "And we left our luggage and money. What is there to do? What a dreadful thing to have happened!"

Then I said:

"We'd better get on to this steamer here, and go back home."

There was, in fact, another steamer at the landing stage, with the name *Thunderstorm* painted on its side.

Plaintively, we asked the local people how long it was since *Comrade Penkin* had left. And whether it was possible to catch up with it if we started walking along the bank in the same direction.

The local people said:

"Why should you try to catch up with it? *Penkin's* up there, by the landing stage. But it's *Thunderstorm* now. It's former *Comrade Penkin*, though. They've painted the new name over the old."

Naturally, we were extremely glad to hear this news. We rushed aboard straight away, and did not leave the steamer until we reached Saratov. We were too frightened to leave it even for a few minutes.

Incidentally, we asked the captain why this amusing fact of painting the new name over the old had happened, and why there was such urgency about it.

"You see, the steamer was given that name, in a sense, by mistake," the captain told us. "There *is* a Comrade Penkin among the ranks of Water Transport workers, but it seems that he was not really discharging his duties in the best possible way. And at present he's on trial for having overstepped the limits of his authority. And we received a telegram, ordering us to paint out his name. That's how it happened that this steamer is now called *Thunderstorm*."

At this we all laughed in a rather dispirited way, and said: "Ah, that's why!"

So we arrived at Saratov. And again, as a group, we went ashore to examine the town.

We did not linger there very much. We just went to a street vendor and bought some cigarettes. And then had a look at one or two public buildings.

Back we came, looked—and again our steamer wasn't there. Instead of it, there was another steamer moored at the landing stage.

Of course, this time we were not as badly frightened as we had been in Samara. We felt we had some chance of catching our steamer still. Perhaps they had again painted the name over. But some of us were rather frightened, nevertheless.

We ran up to the landing stage and asked the local people:

"Where's the *Thunderstorm*?"

"There it is," said the locals. "It's former *Comrade Penkin*. Only from Saratov onwards it'll be called *Korolenko*."

"What's up?" said we. "Don't they know what to do with their paint, or what?"

"We don't know," said the locals. "You'd better ask the bo'swain."

"There's no end of bother with these names," said the bo'swain in answer to our questions. "The name of *Penkin* was given by mistake. As for *Thunderstorm* it wasn't what you would call a cultured sort of name. It was, in a way, without a principle. A thunderstorm, after all, is only a phenomenon of Nature. And it conveys nothing either to the intellect or to the heart. The captain was reprimanded on that account. That's why we've painted it over."

Then we felt very much cheered up, and said: "Ah, that's what it is!" And, of course, we came aboard the steamer *Korolenko* and went on.

But the bo'swain told us:

"Don't you get upset again if you see another name on it after we've got to Astrakan."

But we told him that this was not likely to happen. Because Korolenko, after all, was a well-known writer.

On the whole we got to Astrakan without much trouble. And from Astrakan we returned home by land. So that the final destiny of the steamer is unknown to us.

But I have little doubt that the name remained painted on its side. I think, probably for ever, for the main reason that Korolenko has been dead some time, while Penkin is still alive. And being alive is a great handicap to preserving a reputation.

MICHAEL ZOSHCHENKO
(Translated by Elisaveta Fen)

LOVE OF MEAT

THERE is one wartime myth that I find almost impossible to believe. It is that there are large numbers of people with plenty of money who go from one hotel to another, never spending more than four or five days at any of them because, if they stay any longer, they will come under the rationing regulations and will have to eat as meagrely as their couponed fellow-citizens. I refuse to believe this for several reasons. In the first place, so far as I can discover, the hotels in security areas are already so full that a stranger has no certainty of finding accommodation in them. They are already packed with retired people and people with private means who in normal times would be living in Continental resorts, spas and coastal towns. As a result, it is said to be extremely difficult to get a bed in a country hotel even for a single night. There might, of course, be a conspiracy among hotel-keepers to exchange guests every four or five days and so enable them all to live in perpetual gluttony. But there is no evidence of the existence of such a conspiracy.

In the second place, there is plenty of food for the normal man or woman even under the rationing restrictions. It would not be worth a glutton's while to keep wandering from Cheltenham to Buxton and from Buxton to Harrogate in search of extra food when he can get masses of food such as chicken, fish, game and what are offensively called offals coupon-free. The ordinary man, I feel sure, would much rather pass the winter gorging on chicken and turkey and tongue and liver at one hotel than in an incessant peregrination from place to place in search of a little extra beef and mutton.

My third reason for doubting the current legend about the rich is that in the last generation or so most of the rich have lost their appetities. Millionaires in particular are abstemious men. One seldom hears of one of them who does not lunch on a couple of dry biscuits and a glass of barley water. As for millionaires' wives, under doctors' orders, they live largely on orange juice, tomatoes, water-cress and biscuits containing vitamin D. It is said that only one in ten of them dare eat even a potato.

Eating is certainly not what it used to be. When I first went into Simpson's in the Strand in the early part of the century, it seemed to me to be thronged with enormous men, weighing from sixteen to twenty stone, all engaged in the happy business of eating too much. When I tasted Simpson's saddle of mutton, I, too, began to feel strange cravings. I watched gluttons all round me eating till the eyes started out of their heads, and I felt for the moment that to eat such food till the eyes started out of one's head was the chief end of man. Never had there been more generous helpings, and when one's plate was empty—and who ever failed to empty his plate at Simpson's?—the busy smiling carver would wheel the saddle up to the table, take off the cover and fill the plate with new slices of deliciousness. There was none of that niggardly "Followers will be charged extra," which I have seen on the menu-card of a country tea-shop. Every day was a kind of Christmas Day on which one was plied with food till one was comatose. Quantity and quality were never more happily wedded. No wonder that Americans coming to London felt when they entered Simpson's that they had arrived in a Promised Land of abundance and good cookery. One of them, believing that Canterbury lamb came from Canterbury in England, wrote an ecstatic tribute to the Canterbury lamb which she said was the dish of dishes at Simpson's. It was libellous but it was well-meant.

It is some time since I have lunched at Simpson's; but I cannot believe that the guests nowadays go to work at table with those insatiable Edwardian appetites. Eating in those days was, as an enthusiast once said to me about Rugby football, a man's game, and the best feats of eating were performed in restaurants and clubs in which the entrance of a woman would have been a profanation. Free from female eyes and the clamour of children, men felt curiously happy and did not stint themselves as they ate. They were under no obligation to give some woman or child the best portion. Every man was after the best portion for himself, and plenty of it. This may not have been the moon, but I think it was the sunset, of the great age of eating.

It seems to me odd, as I look back, that while men were proving themselves such giants at the table, women as a rule were even more abstemious eaters than they are to-day. As a boy, I knew a man who could eat a whole duck at a meal, but I never met a woman who would eat more than the wing of a duck. I have heard women protesting that even this was more than they wanted: there were women, indeed, who seemed to take a pride in going through life as nibblers. This, I suspect, was largely due to the belief that men prefer women with small appetites. Had not Byron said that there was nothing more disgusting than to see a beautiful woman eating? The Victorian woman undoubtedly did her best not to be too disgusting at table. Many women, I am sure, suffered severely under this repression of appetite. At the same time, the wisest of them made up for it between meals. I knew of one young woman who would never take more than a single slice of the breast of chicken at table but who was constantly found between meals eating ravenously in the pantry. The secret eaters of those days, indeed, were probably as numerous as the secret drinkers. Even so, I doubt whether women as a whole have ever loved strong meats as men love them. I have sat beside a man, a dear friend of mine, who, having finished a huge steak, called to the waiter, "Waiter, bring me another steak." I cannot imagine any woman of my acquaintance doing anything on this heroic scale.

If there are any rich people posting round the country in search of more food than they are entitled to, then I conclude that they must be men. And I fancy they must be old or elderly men—the last of the Edwardians. They must belong to a generation that frequented characteristically English restaurants and chop-houses where beef and mutton were the staple dishes. Without beef and mutton they feel marooned from all they love, as a heavy smoker feels without tobacco. Some of them may even believe that life is not worth living without beef. I knew a man thirty years ago who believed that beef is the only food fit to be eaten by man, and who traced the degeneracy of England, as he thought it, to the gradual shifting of the national appetite from beef to mutton. I know another man who maintains that even beef is not what it used to be. "They kill the beasts too young," he said to me. "It stands to reason that there isn't the same strength in beef from a one-year-old or two-year-old steer as in beef from a three-year-old." All this suggests that there is at least a minority of men who take beef seriously—so seriously that they might be tempted to break the laws of decent behaviour, if not the law of the land, to get it.

For myself, I have none of these cravings. It is true that I have become fonder of beef and mutton since they were rationed: they have now a scarcity value that makes them somehow seem more desirable than they used to be. Even so, I would not walk a mile if I were told that I should be able to get the finest steak in England at the end of it. This is not a virtue on my part: it is probably due to over-smoking, which is said to moderate the passions. Hence, though I have no inordinate longing for extra beef, I cannot withhold sympathy from those who have this longing. I have known others who had a similar longing for butter, others who longed for sugar, and others for curried prawns. The imaginative life takes many forms. With the passionate meat-eater, it takes the form, no doubt, of dreams of beef, mutton and pork in the largest possible helpings. It seems to me to be in itself an innocent dream, like a child's dream of pudding.

All the trouble arises, of course, from the impossibility of devising a just rationing system. A rationing system is bound to treat all men as equals, whereas one of the outstanding facts of life is that men are wildly unequal in their appetites. Imagine giving Sir John Falstaff the same allowance of liquor as the President of the Band of Hope. Yet something like that is what is happening in the matter of rationing meat. The lifelong glutton is given the same portion as the man with the appetite of a mouse. Would Socrates have called this justice? Is it not possible to devise a scheme whereby special gluttons' ration cards will be issued, allowing all citizens who make a profession of gluttony on oath in presence of a magistrate to buy those quantities of beef and mutton that mean as much to them as tobacco does to you and me? I hate to think of them being harried from hotel to hotel, with their maws ravening in search of the fleshpots. Besides, there can be only a few of them left. The sun has undoubtedly set on gluttony. Would that something better than gunnery had come to take its place!

Y. Y.

LORD LOTHIAN

LORD LOTHIAN had as much charm as any man I've known in public life. He was an aristocrat, an intellectual and a man of good will. One of Milner's kindergarten and Editor of the *Round Table*, he built for himself a happy life and enviable position a little outside and above the ordinary political battle. He escaped the dust of politics; if he also missed the palm (unless a successful period of fifteen months as Ambassador in Washington is palm enough) he had many compensations. Nevertheless, he would have done better in a period in which the Liberal Party flourished. The rub of regular party work would have given stability to his opinions. They changed too much and too fast. When he came back from the famous visit to Russia with Bernard Shaw and Lord and Lady Astor, he surprised everyone by a speech of discriminating praise of Stalin's regime, from which, he told his wealthy and highly born friends, they ought to learn many lessons.

I first got to know Lothian when he asked me for a week-end to Blickley Hall, one of the stateliest of the stately homes of England. He had just come back from a long trip which had included both Nazi Germany and Japan. He feared the Japanese militarists meant mischief in any case and that nothing we could do would stop them setting the Far East ablaze. He took a different view of the Nazis, whom he thought we could successfully appease and convert into friends. I think his Christian Science came in here: he always hoped his own good will would conjure away the illusion of evil in others. A more important influence perhaps was the pricking of conscience about Versailles. He wrote a very candid confession—to the *Times* if I remember rightly—admitting the part he had played, when, as Philip Kerr and one of Lloyd George's secretaries—he had backed the disgraceful dodge by which the indemnity imposed on Germany was inflated to unpayable dimensions. He was never an economist, but he could see, fifteen years or so too late, the folly and evil of this indemnity, and in his last speech he emphatically denounced the post-war system of nationalistic restriction. It was wrong to call him "pro-Nazi," and he was one of the most helpful of those who took pains to rescue victims from Nazi persecution in days when the intervention of influential people could still sometimes save a scientist or man of letters from a concentration camp. But he was strangely blind and credulous about the Nazis. I remember vividly a lunch with Lothian two days after the German seizure of Vienna. The rest of us were aghast; we pictured the fate of Jewish and Socialist Vienna and we saw that Hitler felt strong enough to begin the conquest of Europe promised in *Mein Kampf*. Lord Lothian arrived in the best of spirits. Now, he said, he thought things had really taken a turn for the better; the Treaty of Versailles had been wiped out and Hitler would be satisfied. Perhaps the Führer would consent to come back to the League of Nations; we could begin to talk about disarmament and arrange all other differences round a table. We scarcely knew where to begin in disillusioning him. He had seen Hitler; he believed what he said. I tried an enfilading attack. Some of us, I told him, had been in Spain, where the Republic was being smashed by German aeroplanes, where German officials were largely in control on Franco's side and German intentions to grasp the strategic points and mineral wealth of Spain were taken for granted. Did this look as if Hitler would be satisfied with incorporating six million people of German blood within the Reich? Lord Lothian, always willing to listen to new ideas, thought this very far-fetched, until one of our number, who had much knowledge of relief work in Spain, told him that most of his negotiations with Franco were with officials who talked German. Lord Lothian promptly asked him down for the week-end and a few days later made a speech in which he included a strong passage emphasising the danger of aggression in Spain and urging the need of maintaining its independence.

I relate this story because it illustrates the chief weakness of a man who had excellent brains, a well-developed social conscience, a progressive outlook and an open—a too open—mind. He had that natural optimism of temperament that suits so well the English gentleman and aristocrat. On the problem of India, where he took an enlightened Liberal attitude, on Labour questions, where he advocated a partnership between Labour and Capital, in foreign affairs, where he only made an exception of the Japanese War Lords—in all these he believed that a solution would be forthcoming, given a little good will and tact, the right influences and contacts, a readiness to hear the other fellow's point of view, and a persuasive charm in stating your own. It is a delightful philosophy and true enough if applied in a stable world among men of comfortable incomes and similar outlook and training. Where the issues are your children's food, your right to a job, the concentration camp or the lust of a world conquest, it breaks down. At any time in the Liberal century up to the war of 1914 Lord Lothian would have been a brilliant success in politics. He had a fine presence and a quick, receptive and persuasive mind. In our day, where conflicts have proved beyond rational solution, the right place for Lord Lothian was Ambassador to the United States. Here all his qualities, his experience, his knowledge had the fullest scope. In advocating close friendship between Britain and the U.S.A., he had always been consistent. No one had so sincerely or so urgently called for the union of the English-speaking world, and it was this note that dominated his final speech in the United States. England to-day will find it difficult to replace him at Washington, and those who knew Lord Lothian will increasingly forget his political mistakes in the memory of his good company and his generous desire for the welfare of his fellow-men.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE TWO CHARLIES

THE past seven days have been Chaplin's week, as once there used to be Hitler weeks when Europe hung before a microphone. After waiting a long time we have been invaded. Is it, as one or two voices have been muttering, too late? Too late for what or for whom? I was in the press at the Press view, but I should like to have held my seat till a couple of days later, when an otherwise empty theatre housed the Cabinet and their friends. How did *The Great Dictator* strike *them*? Mr. Churchill one feels pretty sure about: a rippling satisfaction that made life and cigar-smoke sweeter, until—with Chaplin's final impassioned speech to Democracy—he ceased purring to listen professionally. That speech, simple and tritely worded compared with any of Mr. Churchill's, takes us by surprise and moves us at levels not touched by "we shall meet them on the beaches." Chaplin, that is to say, gives all his message, while Mr. Churchill, necessarily, delivers his on the instalment plan. Other faces at this extraordinary Cabinet meeting would have excited my curiosity more. Lord Halifax—how far did that Sabbath smile, that accompanies our policy towards Russia and the Balkans, yield to things Chaplinesque? And Mr. Eden? Or (to take another line) Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bevin? Most of all, though, I should have been peering in the direction of Mr. Duff Cooper. Laughter there, I hope, was uncontained. As Minister of Propaganda he must have wondered why it did not occur to him months ago to order two hundred copies of *The Great Dictator*, so that everyone should have a chance of seeing it at Christmas; the suggestion was made in these columns and no doubt elsewhere. It may have dawned on him now, between laughs, that there are other ways of stirring hearts than by quoting Macaulay.

For *The Great Dictator* is not only Chaplin's masterpiece but the best heartener we could have, with war standing still or going for or against us. The politics (even the concluding mass appeal) can't be picked away from the pattern of farce and tears. It took Chaplin six months or more to discover that end, and though not perfect it is the right one. You may argue that events have forced it on him, that the Charlie figure has been made to step down from its frame. That is quite true. After two hours' antics and cajolery the tragi-comic mask advances till it fills half the screen; words that would fall cold from any other speaker thrill from him. It seems to me that those (a few) who have recoiled betray themselves. Either they are shocked to find a comedian saying what no one else has been able to say, or

they have turned a blind eye on a good third of the film up to that point. War, persecution, Nazi beastliness in action—so the argument runs—are outside the province of humour; Charlie was funny enough when he was beaten up by cops, but now that the bullies are S.S. men we laugh in another way. Of course we do! In a very different way; and *The Great Dictator*, which gives a full turn to the comic spirit from knockabout to an uneasy catch of the breath, would never be the film it is if we didn't. There are moments when we hardly know whether to laugh or not. At one such moment, in an ominously empty street, the little Jewish barber with bowler and cane is faced by advancing storm-troopers. He turns and begins his familiar shambling trot, only to find that the other end of the street is blocked too; the assailants close in, with Charlie doing a few frantic steps between, and he disappears from view. In a minute or so we have experienced a number of things: sharp dread, suspense, the balance between comic flutter and grim walls closing in (this is a distant shot from above), and it is not till later, when in a similar emergency he dives away clean as a whistle, that our uneasiness is resolved. The laugh when it comes is sudden and full. Some critics have found these intrusions of reality incongruous, but all humour is incongruous; the sharper the incongruity the cleaner must be the release. Chaplin supplies that release infallibly, with endless invention.

What he can do in a single astonishing minute he succeeds, or very nearly succeeds (the film tends to be episodic), in doing with *The Great Dictator* as a whole. As everyone knows, this time he has put two Charlies on the screen instead of one, Hynkel, the dictator, and the little Jewish barber. Their lives run parallel, in palace and ghetto. There is no need to say much about the barber, who is his old creation, wistful and faintly more stylised, and with a small voice of self-disparagement. He appears as a gunner in the last war, whirled round by the anti-aircraft gun he is supposed to be directing. He emerges from a soldiers' rest-home to find the Nazi new order in full swing. He goes courting, a mirror of etiquette for the old-worldly; he is still a little shell-shocked, and moves at times as though to music; he is self-effacing, ready with the quixotic gesture and the quick escape. But though this is still the black and white puppet from out-of-work London in the 'nineties, the old tricks have been reduced to a shorthand. Trousers and boots are no longer immensely too large; even the cane has almost gone. The Voice creeps on us unawares. At the beginning it is Hynkel's voice, of a very different timbre, that soars and explodes, that bends microphones and cascades at street corners; in the end, by a touching reversal, Pagliacci's.

Hynkel is superb. In appearance he is the Charlie doll, cured of arthritis and fresh from a course of magnetism, with the cap and greatcoat and leggings that go with unanswerable yells. One feels here Chaplin's loathing not only of Hitlerism but of the man who has copied his moustache without seeing anything funny in it. His parody of Hitler's speeches, in a language half-Deutsch, half-delicatessen and running to snarls and the sound of popping corks, suggests months of patient study. It is the real thing, racy of the Blood and Soil, and if Chaplin had done nothing else in his film this would have laid one bogy for ever. Close parody gives us also the henchmen, the triumphal Mercedes, the public statues with outstretched arms (a saluting Venus de Milo), the marches-past, the tableaux with mother and child, and Jack Oakie as Napoloni. That amiable comedian, under Chaplin's direction, does wonders with his model, and for pure slapstick nothing equals the meeting of the two dictators in a railway station. Nap, looking out through the window like a mixture of caged gorilla and schoolboy on holiday, sees the reception party slide by. The train has gone ten yards too far. Hynkel and his generals hurry to meet the emergency. "You gottada carpet!" roars Nap from the window. "Well, you puttema down!" At that moment the train violently shuttles back.

The triumph of Chaplin's Hynkel, however, is that it soars to heights of its own. The realistic scenes of Jew-baiting and organised savagery are essential because otherwise our delight in this fantastic portrait of a dictator would lift us too far from disagreeable fact. Hynkel lives in a palace of vast rooms decorated with ivory and gold, and his activity is grandiose in proportion. He has a personal shaving saloon that outshines a Lyons' corner-house; two artists, a painter and a sculptor, are always waiting in a private studio for the moments that can be spared between interviews and the signing of treaties: for one minute perhaps in the morning the Leader will spring on to the platform in the attitude of a Man of Destiny, and brush and chisel will just be raised in time before he vanishes as quickly as he came. These immensities have, of course, their pitfalls, and Hynkel is the predestined victim of voluminous cloaks, slippery stairs or a pen that sticks to its pen-holder. His ensuing rages are magnificent; Hitler himself (here we feel in touch with the original) could not stage them better. Some of the reveries, too, are memorably Hitlerian; especially a scene in which Hynkel plays with a bubble World and executes a weird hypnotic dance in which the World finally snaps in his embrace. Other moods and longings—the vicious love-snort interrupted by the telephone, the piano-stroking on the night of the ghetto murders, the three blonde stenographers inducing visions of a blonde universe ("we will exterminate the Jews, and then the brunettes")—these lead us farther and farther away from Hitler. Hynkel, in fact, is at times almost as much a pure creation as the little barber, and we have had hints of him before, in the evening-dress Charlie, tipsy as a rat, who would knock over an old beggar in the street.

The two Charlies run side by side through the film, interleaved, Cox coming in when Box is out, never meeting, save to the extent that once the martial howl sweeps down from amplifiers when bowler-and-cane are taking a stroll. The opposition is brilliantly worked out and varied, and if it is Chaplin all the while, what we are made to feel is the unity rather than the egotism. One sequence perfectly points the contrast. First there is Hynkel balefully and languorously wooing the World, with the look that goes with "clad in white samite, mystic, wonderful," though he is wearing a khaki shirt and knee breeches; then, we are shown the barber briskly shaving a customer to the tempos of a Brahms's rhapsody. In both performances the ballet is as perfectly timed and executed as the movements of a Nijinsky. Do you remember the dance of the rolls in *The Gold Rush*? The same magic is employed here, with all Chaplin has learnt since, to give wings to dancers larger than life.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

TO POETS AND AIRMEN

THINKERS and airmen—all such
Friends and pilots upon the edge
Of the skies of the future—much
You require a bullet's eye of courage
To fly through this age.

The paper brows are winged and helmeted,
The blind ankles bound to a white road,
Which streams into a night of lead
Where cities explode.
Fates unload

Hatred burning, in small parcels,
Outrage against social lies,
Hearts breaking against stone refusals
Of men to show small mercies
To men. Now death replies
Releasing new, familiar devils.

And yet, before you throw away your childhood
With the lambs pasturing in flaxen hair,
To plunge into this iron war,
Remember for a flash the wild good
Drunkenness where
You abandoned future care.

And then forget. Become what
Things require. The expletive word.
The all-night-long screeching metal bird.
And all of time shut down in one shot
Of night by a gun uttered.

For the joy that was is hidden under grass
Shadows of hawks flicker over.
Buried in cellars is laughter that once was
Which the pick and shovel endeavour
Vainly to uncover;
Like a child buried when the raiders pass.

With axe and shovel men hunt among the bricks,
With lamps and water, for their soul
Of lilac in the city square; they hack with picks
Amongst the ruins for their love's goal,
As though a smile frozen at the North Pole
Might take pity on their tricks.

STEPHEN SPENDER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Argentine Nights," at the Odeon
"A Date With Destiny," at the Plaza

The Ritz Brothers come round again to find audiences already "worked" by their rivals. One end of the carpet has been whisked away by Marx, the other gobbled up by Stooges, and what is there left to take a stand on? Well, there will always be a halfway public that finds Groucho a bit much and the gorillas a bit much, too, and between glitter and grunt the Ritzes slip in. They are spectacular, famous violinists or infamous bookies, their faces gibber relentlessly in different keys, they sing and dance well, and that leads to troupes of girls. *Argentine Nights* is up to Ritz standard, and sports as well the Andrew Sisters and a female jazz band. Decor changes from a rally of creditors to a liner, a South American charabanc and the Hotel Mañana in gaucho-infested country. The funniest moment is the burlesque by the Ritz Brothers of the Andrew Sisters, to which apparently there is no reply.

A Date With Destiny is strong drama, mingling evil with psychiatry, and taking its tone from Basil Rathbone's moustache, which is thinner than a plucked eyebrow. Dr. George Sebastien (Rathbone) is an accomplished wife-killer, who finds psycho-analysis good hunting ground for future wives, and in New York he "comes under the influence of a beautiful woman." She, too, is a mass of complexes, but a simple attractive girl (Ellen Drew) at heart. She is saved from falling off a top storey, and after a clash in which good and evil and childhoods and kisses are exchanged, the Doctor dives off himself. The diving is beautifully done and a lesson to all who have leanings from top storeys.

London Philharmonic at the Queen's Hall

To Dr. Reginald Jacques' delicate sense of rhythm the London Philharmonic Orchestra responded at its Bach concert last Saturday with the sensitive intelligence one expects from it. It was at its best in the Third Suite, where strings and trumpets share the glory, but the solo flute in the Second Suite was disappointing. Mr. Kendall Taylor as pianist in the Concerto in D Minor had all the graces and restraints of the English tradition, but this music has a fire and a dynamic rush which he missed. Best of all were the two lovely reminders of the B Minor Mass—the "Laudamus Te" and "Agnus Dei," which Miss Mary Jarred sung to a perfectly tempered orchestra.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, December 21st—
- Concert of Modern Music, Free German League, 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3.
- Carol Concert by Refugees and their English friends, Holy Trinity Church Hall, Kingsway, 2. And on December 22nd.
- Carol Service of Nine Lessons, Holy Trinity Church, St. Marylebone, 3.
- "Where the Rainbow Ends," New.

SUNDAY, December 22nd—
- J. McCabe: "The Starry Heavens and the Moral Law," Conway Hall, 11.
- Dr. L. Brav: "Film and Music," 11.30. And at 2.15, Scenes from "Lysistrata" (Aristophanes) and from "Wocek" and "Leonce and Lena" (Buechner). 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3.
- "Messiah," Queen's Hall, 2.
- Demonstration of Forward Movement of the P.P.U. Speakers include Ethel Mannin, J. Middleton Murry and Donald Soper. Aeolian Hall, Bond Street, 2.30.

MONDAY, December 23rd—
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. Charles Duff: "Spain To-day and To-morrow," 12 Gt. Newport Street, 1.
- "Aladdin," Coliseum.

TUESDAY, December 24th—
- "Berkeley Square," Vaudeville.

THURSDAY, December 26th—
- "The Merry Wives of Windsor," Strand.

Correspondence

DEMOCRACY IN THE COLONIAL EMPIRE

SIR,—An advertisement recently published by the Ministry of Information in the press under the heading "The Greatest Crusade" contains assertions, since repeated by the Minister in the House on October 14th, which are incorrect and may mislead public opinion. The main statements of the advertisement are that the British Empire is "a family of free nations," that in it "men and women of every colour are working out their own destiny" and that "in this war they are fighting shoulder to shoulder of their own free will."

Unhappily, facts controvert these assertions. The large majority of the peoples of the Empire are not free and have little or no say in either their own or imperial affairs. India, for instance, has been committed to this war without any consultation of the wishes of her people and this is leading to a very critical state of affairs in that country.

If the Ministry's statements are true why, for, example, are not India, Ceylon and Burma free and independent countries and why are Indians imprisoned for their attitude to the war and, in other parts of the Empire, British subjects imprisoned for struggling to improve social conditions and raise the standard of living. Why has there been no undertaking to establish the democratic freedom of the peoples of the colonies on the lines that they themselves shall freely determine? This argument applies to Ireland, whose partition the British Government maintains, to Cyprus, whose constitution is suspended and whose people are deprived of what self-government they had, to the West Indies, whose slum conditions have been admitted, denounced and yet continue, and to East and West Africa, no less than to India, Burma, Ceylon and Malaya. The future relation of Britain to her subject peoples must be based on reciprocity, equality and friendship, but this is not at present the case.

Southern Rhodesia is mentioned by the Ministry of Information as a country which, though not yet an equal partner, controls its own affairs. In Southern and Northern Rhodesia native Africans have no democratic rights nor direct representation, their sole safeguards being the various denominational missions and the European officials of the Native Departments of the Civil Service.

It was stated in reply to a question in the Imperial Parliament that the number of cases in which sentences of whipping were passed in the District Court of Southern Rhodesia during the years 1931-5 were 418, 511, 676, 638, and 722. This statement showed that flogging had been on the increase. Failure to pay the poll tax was punished with lashing in Johannesburg, which led to the expression of the view in the press that there was very little difference as far as the Native Africans are concerned between "democratic" South Africa and "Fascist" Germany.

The Labour Representation Act in Southern Rhodesia, approved by the British Government, excluded Native Rhodesians from all urban areas unless they bore a pass, and legalised prostitution. The Native Preachers' Act in Southern Rhodesia required all native preachers to be registered.

In Sierra Leone the introduction prior to the outbreak of war of the Sedition Ordinance, which went further than our own Sedition Act of 1934, was bitterly resented by the people. In that colony the practice of roping Africans and applying pepper to their persons for the purpose of extorting tax-payment was admitted in the Imperial Parliament by the Colonial Secretary. Also it has been reported that a man has been flogged to death in connection with tax-collection.

So impoverished have the West African people become under British rule that vigorous protests have been uttered by the British textile and other exporting interests against the loss of trade owing to the decreased purchasing power of the native population in West Africa.

It would be very good if the Ministry's professions were true. But unfortunately the majority of the peoples of the British Empire are subject peoples. The freedom of these peoples is essential to the building of a new and better order among the nations, and only when these peoples are free will we really stand as the opposite of the Nazi system, which the Ministry's statement rightly condemns.

OLIVIER

THIS ENTERTAINMENT PROBLEM

SIR,—The impression left on most readers by Mr. Ivor Brown's articles will be one of thankful surprise that so much has already been done by Authority to foster the Arts amid the stress of war. For once, hasty action has been justified; though, as Mr. Brown hints, there are certain points which merit further consideration if we are to look forward to the peacetime development of what is admittedly a wartime experiment.

C.E.M.A., if it is one day to emerge as an official Ministry of the Arts, needs some drastic reform in its constitution. Mr. Brown implies that it has worked through existing welfare and cultural organisations. But, incredible as it may seem, none of these organisations is represented on its Council, neither were they brought into consultation when the policy of the Council was formulated by the Pilgrim Trust, and, where one might have hoped that Government interposition would have sorted out and correlated the overlapping which already existed in many directions, overlapping has increased, and there has been waste both of man-power and money. A situation, indeed, has arisen which is analogous to that described by Viscount Bridgeman in a recent letter to the *Times* on the County Badge scheme for Physical Training. "The Board of Education," he writes, "has apparently made little serious attempt to bring into line the voluntary bodies which are now dealing with youth problems under difficulties, financial and otherwise, which are increasing daily. They are old hands at the job and are being cold-shouldered at the moment when they could help. Cannot they take a real hand in planning the scheme?"

If C.E.M.A. were merely a Body for the provision of grants-in-aid, this criticism might not apply. But it has undertaken executive powers, and, unless on a representative basis, these powers cannot but result in a circumscribed approach which is quite unworthy of any permanent State scheme of artistic patronage.

As for the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre, this once more has fallen a victim to Mr. Brown's unfailing talent for the telling phrase. Has it, or has it not, found in South Kensington "a better 'ole"? Mr. Brown is good enough to give us the benefit of the doubt, but not the credit for remaining, through two great wars and twenty years of uneasy peace, faithful to an ideal which, though a stumbling-block to many, does seem to conserve the only hope for a revival of the higher manifestations of theatrical art in this country. In a welter of valuable effort in all sorts of directions, the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre provides the only concrete and well-considered scheme for an exemplary centre of dramatic production. That the National Theatre Committee has been right in refusing to be sidetracked from this noble and practical conception will, I believe, be one day apparent.

GEOFFREY WHITWORTH,
Director,
British Drama League
(Hon. Sec. Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee).

9 Fitzroy Square,
London, W.1.

SIR,—During the last fifteen months the London Philharmonic Orchestra has made a spectacular recovery from complete bankruptcy to a state where, with careful management, the continued activity of the Orchestra is no longer seriously in doubt. This was achieved, not by the financial genius of its democratically elected Committee, but by assistance from various quarters.

Since Mr. Ivor Brown, in his second article on "This Entertainment Problem," makes misleading claims on behalf of one organisation and gibes at those responsible for organising the salvation of the L.P.O., it may interest your readers to know the exact history.

The L.P.O. has been saved principally by members of the public, who, in answer to appeals by Sir Thomas Beecham in January, and Mr. J. B. Priestley in July onwards, subscribed about £5,000. In addition, the administrators of the Pilgrim Trust Fund allocated £1,000, to be paid in respect of not less than ten approved concerts. Certain other small donations and guarantees were made by educational and other bodies in order to attract the Orchestra to certain towns. As a result, the L.P.O. has maintained its standard of playing and, with the help of Mr. Jack Hylton, and by means of its own organisation, has

played to an aggregate audience of about 20,000 people each week during the last few months. On its own initiative it has taken music to towns "not usually so visited," as when it gave the first symphony concert for twenty-five years in Wigan, to be followed there a few weeks later by the Hallé Orchestra.

Mr. Brown laughs at "every publicist who knows how to win the war" and at the "light brigade of celebrities . . . making their heavily lime-lit charge to the rescue." This does less than justice to those busy men who devoted time and energy to saving the L.P.O. as a symbol of the values we are fighting for, but, by way of compensation, he does more than justice to C.E.M.A., an organisation to which he seems curiously attached. What, in fact, has C.E.M.A. done for the L.P.O.? Nothing at all beyond administering what was left of the Pilgrim Trust grant of £1,000 when the Treasury put up a certain sum for music and the arts. C.E.M.A. did not divert a single penny of this latter sum to the Pilgrim Trust allocation, and it is a shameless hoodwinking of the public to suggest that the L.P.O. has derived the slightest material benefit from C.E.M.A. which it would not have had if this body had not been born.

For those of us who, ashamed of recurrent appeals to the public, are impatiently waiting for the Government to recognise its responsibility, the claims of Mr. Brown form a dangerous obstacle. He is not serving the cause of the symphony orchestra in asserting that the L.P.O. has been assisted by the Treasury through C.E.M.A., for this is not the truth.

295 Regent Street, W.1. THOMAS RUSSELL, Secretary, London Philharmonic Orchestra

STATE CAPITALISM

SIR,—If Mr. Douglas Jay wishes to have a serious discussion with me about the merits of State Capitalism, he must not quibble. I made it perfectly clear—except in one slipshod sentence—that I would apply a capital levy of 100 per cent. on *the amounts by which fortunes exceeded* £100,000. This, he says, is "surely not a seriously thought-out taxation plan." I never pretended to be thinking out taxation plans. I was thinking primarily of social justice, the removal of inequality, and the lifting of the burden of debt in the new society after the war. Mr. Jay is directing his thought to the finance of the war. I am not thinking of war finance at all, but of our peace aims. I do not believe Mr. Jay is interested in my peace scheme at all. He merely wants to put across his annual capital levy as a Labour Party plan for financing the war.

Has the Labour Party really adopted Mr. Jay's plan? I admit that Mr. Jay wrote an excellent pamphlet on how to pay for the war which the Labour Party Executive published. This pamphlet contained his proposal for an annual capital levy. But do Messrs. Attlee, Greenwood, Dalton and Pethwick-Lawrence now support it? Does Mr. Bevin support it? I have my doubts.

It would be nice to adopt Mr. Jay's plan for an annual capital levy during the war which would get the property class accustomed to making a return of capital each year to the Inland Revenue and to paying a capital tax as Swiss, Dutch and American capitalists do without shrieking. But Mr. Jay's scheme is not such a good scheme as mine because it annoys and frightens private capital without taking it over. It upsets the machinery of the capitalist system without substituting anything better in its place. I believe I have something better to take its place, and I trust Mr. Jay will seriously tell me where I have gone wrong.

The Athenaeum. NICHOLAS DAVENPORT

SIR,—How does Mr. Nicholas Davenport hope to bring about "State Capital"? I have just finished re-reading *Tory M.P.* It leaves me feeling that anything but palliative reforms are hopeless; that the stranglehold which Capital has on the nation's economic and political life is so complete that nothing can be done to break it in less than three generations.

Also it has been my lot for 40 years to know fairly intimately an average of 600 families of working people, visiting each family from 10 to 15 years. The experience has left me hopeless of any realisation on their part of the possibility of a new social life. Perhaps 5 per cent. of them are Labour. I say Labour purposely, not Socialist; just Trades Union Labour with no better outlook than that of the Trades Union leaders. I seldom hear them complain of their conditions—they take them for granted, and when I try to give them a lead it is useless. How, then, can "State Capital" or any revolutionary reform be brought into being?

Bournville, Birmingham. FRANK MATHEWS

QUOTAS

SIR,—In the second of his articles on *Can Farming Survive?* Mr. L. F. Easterbrook says: "Economists seem to hate quotas, although I have never been able to discover from them very good reasons."

The objection to quotas is that they stereotype the existing geographical range and technical set-up of production. Changes in transport conditions, methods of production and soil-utilisation, varieties of cultivated plants or domesticated animals, and patterns of consumers' demand bring about changes in the costs of producers in different regions. Equal *proportional* changes in the output of all producers or of all regions, such as a quota enforces, are uneconomic if producers' relative costs are changing. Thus, it may be that, to take full advantage of the altered conditions, producers in region A should increase their output by 30 per cent. while producers in region B should diminish theirs by 10 per cent. To impose a uniform increase of 10 per cent. is to restrict production in region A, where costs are relatively low, and to maintain production in B, where costs are relatively high. It prevents the full development of technical possibilities in A and hinders the transference of productive resources in B to the uses for which they are best fitted.

The least objectionable form of quota is one which is transferable at a price. Under this form, production can be transferred, at a cost, from high-cost producers to low-cost producers, and some compensation is given to displaced high-cost producers. But, even so, the expansion of output by low-cost producers is hindered. If it is socially desirable to compensate superseded producers, it would be better to do so by means of a tax levied on the whole community rather than by one on low-cost producers in the same industry.

Quotas are part of the policy of preserving the vested interests of people who happen to be engaged in certain occupations at a particular time, at the cost of making consumers accept worse and dearer goods, instead of creating social institutions which will oblige producers to make what consumers want at a minimum cost. They are foreign both to individualism and to real socialism: they belong to that bastard social policy which combines the disadvantages of both with the advantages of neither.

35 Richmond Road, Leeds, 6. H. D. DICKINSON

A.R.P. CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

SIR,—I understand from the *Daily Herald* of November 30th that the Labour Party has banned the A.R.P. Co-ordinating Committee as an organisation controlled by the Communist Party. The objects of the committee are to give advice and criticism on methods of protection against air raids.

As one of the officials of the committee I wish to say that I am not a member of the Communist Party, open or secret. I have no sympathy with its policy and have vigorously opposed it. But it is well to remember that the same argument of communist control was used with equal truth by Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd when defending the futile "gas proof" room.

The provision of adequate protection against air raids, which has always been the aim of the committee, is the surest way of maintaining the will of the people to continue this war to victory. The policy of the committee may therefore be said to be opposed to the recent policy of the C.P. On the other hand, there is no difference between the aims of this committee and the policy of the Labour Party as set out in its pamphlet published in January, 1939.

It is most necessary that Government policy should be criticised. In the last war the vigorous criticism of the Food (War) Committee of the Royal Society contributed much to the eventual adoption of a sound food policy. It would have been far better if the Royal Society had, some years ago, appointed an A.R.P. Committee. As it has not done so, we will continue to do our best. It is a pity that the Labour Party should present all the credit to the Communists.

18, Warwick Road, Bishop's Stortford. J. R. MARRACK, Vice-Chairman.

LONG WEEK-END

SIR,—Your reviewer, Mr. T. C. Worsley, makes two mysterious remarks which I should like to see explained. He says of *The Long Week-End* by Alan Hodge and myself, but without adducing any proof, that our account of the formation of the National Government is inadequate and, if true, includes only enough of the truth to give a "false picture." Just how much truth, in a true account, is needed to give a false picture? And again: "If our Press Lords are really as acute in spotting winners as they are said to be, Mr. Robert Graves should soon be as well known to the newspaper public as his older brother." Philip Graves of the *Times*, nineteen years older than myself and twenty-three years older than my brother Charles of the *Daily Mail*, is, though one of the ablest journalists of his day, almost unknown to the newspaper public, because he rarely signs his work. Just how well known would I become if an acute Press Lord spotted me?

Galmpton, Near Brixham. ROBERT GRAVES

[Mr. Worsley says: "I hope I can give Mr. Graves a satisfactory explanation by means of an example. For Mr. Graves to describe me as 'ignorant' would be true, in so far as I did not know that Charles was younger than Robert. But such a description of me 'if true, includes only enough of the truth to give a false picture'."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

NAZIS AND GERMANS

SIR,—This week you attack Sir Robert Vansittart for his broadcasts, and you comment understandably enough that the Polish leaders will be a great obstacle when it comes to making the sort of peace you want, of international tolerance and partnership. But we must allow for the feelings of the Poles, which are even more understandable than your mistrust of them; their hatred of Germans is a fact, even though, being an emotion, it gets in the way of dispassionate planners. Moreover, however much it may be true that we shall win the peace only by appealing to and winning over the decent elements in the German people, it is equally true that Germany is governed by men who have no place in a newly civilised country or continent. Their record at home for eight years and perhaps still more in Poland for one year stamps them as brutalised criminals who deserve punishment, and must never be allowed freedom to try again for power.

Perhaps some combination of your type of social and economic outlook with an intention of suitably punishing leading and minor Nazi bosses will provide a link between British liberals and Poles. After all, it must be admitted by the most sentimental liberal that Himmler (for example) would be better dead; and that the Poles have every reason to wish him so. S. J. P. HOWARTH

Down House, Downe, Kent.

MUSIC AT OXFORD

SIR,—Many people are finding music as essential to them as vitamins if they are to stand the strain of the war. Music, however (the real thing) is hard to come by for busy workers, and to meet their needs we have planned at Oxford a week-end of concerts by first-rate artists. Our programme would include an orchestral concert, a string quartet concert, and three recitals, pianoforte, organ and vocal, and a "drop in and sing" performance of a choral work. The dates would be the 3rd to the 6th of January.

The music authorities in Oxford are sympathetic, we have the artists, we have excellent accommodation for visitors and the terms are moderate. We cannot, however, proceed further in making arrangements without some guarantee against loss and without the assurance of sufficient support. May we ask that those who are interested should write to us at once, so that we may send them the details of the plan? We hope that it may not be necessary to call on guarantors to any large extent: in the unlikely event of there being a balance on the right side, it would be given to the Lord Mayor's Air Raid Distress Fund.

The Manor House, Little Gaddesden, Berkhamsted. DOROTHY ERHART. KATHLEEN TALBOT.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

UNTIL the fall of France the last war imposed upon the present one like a mirage. Since then, books about the last war have become intolerable. There are, nevertheless, two reasons for making an exception of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's narrative of his work as an intelligence officer in Greece. First, Greece is in the news and it is instructive to watch the earlier English, French and Italian intrigues in the Eastern Mediterranean. Secondly, when so much has been outmoded, Mr. Mackenzie's is a still applicable experience of modern war. For whatever the changes in strategy, tactics and weapons, war has to-day an even larger bureaucracy; a bureaucracy in which, it seems, as much energy is spent in fighting other departments not merely on policies but for prestige, as is spent in fighting the enemy. We recall the accounts of Washington spending vital time in cooling the jealousies of his officers; or the intrigues described in M. Jules Romains' *Verdun*. The mind of bureaucracy is Kafka-like; it adores the process, abhors results; it wanders and winds its way back from the urgent and actual; it delights in obstacles. At points in Mr. Mackenzie's book we have to remind ourselves that England was not fighting the French or the Italians, but the Germans and the Turks. Formulae and phrases make a crust of lichen on fact until the official mind ceases to see a fact altogether. An astonishing example of this, which will no doubt have its parallel in the present war, occurred during Mr. Mackenzie's reign at Syra. He had an urgent order from London to remove a community of French nuns from Tenos because they were in communication with the enemy. He demanded proof:

> In due course a copy of the papers was sent to me, and sure enough in them was typed a warning to the captain of the submarine to keep away from Tenos because the nuns were in communication with the enemy. Unfortunately, the brain that analysed those papers forgot that to the Germans we were the enemy.

*Aegean Memories** is the final and belated instalment of Mr. Mackenzie's experiences. It is neither as exhilarating nor as diverting as the earlier ones; there is not the same Georgian nostalgia; his malice takes on a tedious wasp-like buzz. The prosecution has rattled him. The comic-opera spies, who amused by their grotesque secretiveness and their neuroses, have been suppressed, and elsewhere Mr. Mackenzie relies too much on letters and reports so that the reader may judge the rights and wrongs of the continual intrigues of Athens, London and Cairo, for himself. That is asking too much. Nothing is so dead as dead intrigue. Since he is clever, vain and amusing, we are delighted to grant that Mr. Mackenzie is right; but to invite us, as he does, into all the literal detail of his dossier looks like pedantry or megalomania if one accepts his word that it is not due to persecution. Continual quotation is irritating to the eye. But there it is. After the disaster in Athens in 1916, when his organisation was attacked and made the best of their flight by annexing the islands of the Cyclades for a provisional government, Mr. Mackenzie was fighting a rearguard action. British policy was uncertain and the official line was to blow hot and cold on its envoys. "This officer," one report on Mr. Mackenzie ran, "has too much initiative." The truth is that brilliant amateurs are always hated by the Services, which have built up a tedious and pompous humbug of self-depreciation; and if it is true that he sometimes hung a card round his neck saying, "Please talk freely. I do not want your job," he showed a disinterestedness that must have terrified those for whom the war was the chance of a lifetime. It is not surprising that officials and generals who did not like "writer-fellers" or "actor-fellers," thought that the new star which had risen in the Near East was behaving suspiciously like a film star. It would, I believe, have pained Mr. Mackenzie to behave like anything else. But I do not believe it was his personality, his too-brilliant reports, his too-polished letters, or even his dashing conceptions of policy which got him into trouble. The English never support their envoys for long. We always play with a second policy in order to create conditions in which compromise can be born. Alas, compromise which is holy to the English, is known as cheating in other countries, and they wish we would admit we are cheating, just as they do.

This is the moment to introduce the figure of General Phillips, the serpent in Mr. Mackenzie's paradise. We were half-committed Venizelists, so the General was sent out as an anti-Venizelist! A strong Greece à la Mackenzie, a weak Greece à la Phillips—we were in agony lest a decision should have to be made, an agony which, once one gets accustomed to it, is described in politics as "masterly inactivity." This maddened the future Scottish nationalist, the romantic champion of the Duke of Windsor. The following letter from Mr. Mackenzie to "C," his tolerant employer and confidant in London, is an interesting commentary on the situation and contains a lucky piece of prophecy, for 1917:

> One of the great points he (General Phillips) made in arguing for his policy was that Great Britain and Germany would be allied in another ten years and therefore that a strong Greece had no particular value and a strong Italy had. I cannot understand why we cannot have a strong Italy and a strong Greece. It is, after all, conceivable that Germany, before allying herself with us, may try to get level with us by allying herself with Russia. It is equally conceivable that Germany will seek to bolster up a weak and disappointed Italy in the interest of her naval strategy, in which case we must have a strong Greece.

Our idea was simply to hold the balance between France and Italy and to pray that no long view of the future would ever be forced upon our very occupied eyes.

General Phillips was the antidote. A hearty character, the General was very upset because the French General placed above him "was not a gentleman," just as Lord Granville, at the same time, seemed to think that to wear a morning coat and top hat in Athens was a vital part of English policy. But soon a feline trait appeared in the General. His Albanian interpreter came and applied for a job with Mr. Mackenzie. Unto the spy, no doubt, all men are spies: Mr. Mackenzie at once gave the Albanian a job, which was to take back to the General a letter which read:

> Dear General,—With this I return you the Albanian spy you so kindly sent to Syra.

A good beginning. It is one more touch to that rather Borgia-like atmosphere in which Mr. Mackenzie revelled. Presently General Phillips began to attack all round. General Fairholme, he said, "had the brains of a linnet." General Fairholme replied that General Phillips had *not* the brains of a puff ball. "Why, *I* got him his promotion."

The battle spreads. To the outsider it is like a quarrel among the prefects, something mysterious and far beyond us. There are plots and counter-plots. Everyone is fighting for his seat in the organisation. There is terrible feeling about a motor car, anger about cyphers, bitterness about a typewriter and awful moments about rank and promotion. Then there is a chance for Mr. Mackenzie, aided by Hope-Johnstone—whose elaborate salutes were to annoy an admiral who suspected mockery—to send to London some advice on strategy garnished with poisoned classical allusion:

> After poring over a large map, H. J. and I decided that there was only one comment to make, which was to invite Military Intelligence to study a school history of Ancient Greece and read what happened to the Persians at Thermopylae, through which pass, 12 feet wide and 900 feet high for a stretch, it was proposed to march two British divisions. A message came from London in reply, headed: Following from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff: "If anything like this occurs again you will be recalled immediately."

Unhappily, the cypher for "following from . . ." arrived corrupt, and when decoded read "LIMEHOUSE FROM THE CIGS."

Mr. Mackenzie has a special eye for this kind of comedy which relieves the baffling Kafka-like saga of his rightness. It was a bad year. Dysentery, neuritis as well as the Foreign Office, tortured him, on the beautiful and austere island. In more serene moments, he would evoke appropriate scenes of the Greek mythology. Eventually he was given a yacht so that he could visit his islands, and that was the height of a career which puts Ashenden's in the shade. There was a spy hunt on one of these little voyages, the quarry being a new German intelligence officer, but the intermediary double-crossed them. It was not unexpected. An intelligence officer soon learns to take a low view of human nature. There was the confectioner who was also an agent, and who wished to have a number of people in his town arrested because of their Royalist activities; these people, it turned out, were all confectioners. The dawn of the new Europe! Or there was the bishop who came at night—and incidentally turned out to have been many years before the unfaithful lover of Lisa, Mr. Mackenzie's housekeeper—who was very anxious to be on the right side politically. Would the British give him privately their guarantee that they were going to set up a Venizelist government on the mainland, because if so he, the bishop, would change sides. Alas, for the Vicar of Bray, he stood later on the balcony before the Greek Republicans and his unconsciousness was too much for him. By mistake he called out Long Live the King!

The portraits which Mr. Mackenzie has drawn, especially in the earlier and better of his four volumes, sent my mind back to M. Jules Romains' *Verdun*. The resemblances are few, but M. Romains also had drawn the war not from beneath but from inside and on top. To him, war was an institution in itself which is handed down from generation to generation like some top-heavy over-capitalised family business which has to be purged and revived, which is subject to slumps, illusory schemes, corruption, sudden ruthlessness or folly, as solid yet also as unstable as human nature itself. No sane man would be shocked that leaders are vain, that careerists career to the summit, that vanity, ambition and idiosyncracy should make the casting votes. The war in France did not produce a great English war book to set beside *Verdun*; our outstanding book, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, was the fruit of a colonial war, and when we consider that in the last war as well as this, our real concern has been not the nation but the Empire, it is natural that *The Seven Pillars* should capture the imagination of a decade. To Lawrence, and also to a lesser personality like Mackenzie (who writes an easier prose), the last war was romantic; for empires provide personal adventure and room for playing with policies. It is the amateur's chance to play the imperialist liberator. He has the illusion, which Lawrence had, that this is his own private war. The disillusion that follows is, therefore, personal and bitter; for in the end "they" rob us—in T. E. Lawrence's curious phrase—"of our victory."

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *Aegean Memories*. By Compton Mackenzie. Chatto and Windus. 12*s*. 6*d*.

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BURNS, OATES.

THE LEANING TOWER

Folios of New Writing (II). Autumn, 1940. Ed. John Lehmann. *Hogarth Press.* 5s.

The latest number of this admirable magazine differs in two ways from its predecessors: in being less insistently Left, and in containing two essays, one by Mrs. Virginia Woolf and the other by Mr. Stephen Spender, which are somewhat critical of the Left Wing school of literature. Mrs. Woolf's essay (a paper read to the Workers' Educational Association in May this year) is very independent and a little tart; Mr. Spender's, since it attempts to criticise the Left school from the inside, is more sympathetic but equally independent. These two essays might have been addressed to two different audiences. Mrs. Woolf, viewing the Left Wing from the outside, sees its faults; Mr. Spender, knowing it from the inside, is aware of its mistakes.

Mrs. Woolf has a gift for envisaging intellectual situations pictorially, with a sort of forlorn poetry. She pictures the writer looking at his subject, a perpetually changing one, and then goes on to describe the chair he sits upon, a chair uplifted somewhat above the common level, because supported on a middle-class or upper-class education. This eminence is like a handy tower, and during the last century it stood at a passably straight angle, so that the writer could look out equably at the landscape spread around him. But now the tower has begun to lean, and when a tower does that, you begin to wonder whether you have any right to be in it, whether it is safe, whether it might not fall at any moment. But these are only a few of one's difficulties. Everything looks strange and distorted, Mrs. Woolf continues, "not altogether upside down, but slanting, sidelong." She enumerates some of the feelings of the leaning-tower writers:

> First discomfort; next self-pity for that discomfort; which pity soon turns to anger—to anger against the builder, against society, for making us uncomfortable. . . . And yet—here is another tendency—how can you altogether abuse a society that is giving you after all a very fine view and some sort of security? You cannot abuse that society wholeheartedly while you continue to profit by that society. And so very naturally you abuse society in the person of some retired admiral or spinster or armament manufacturer; and by abusing them hope to escape whipping yourself.

Mrs. Woolf deduces from her leaning tower all these criticisms of the Left Wing writers. One feels that her image has either distorted her criticism, or her implied criticism has twisted her image. Do the leaning-tower writers have such a very fine view? Is a leaning tower an image of security? Do Mr. Auden and Mr. MacNeice really abuse retired admirals and armament manufacturers because they hope to escape whipping themselves? No doubt a great deal of self-pity is mixed up with Left Wing propaganda poetry. It is a relief to hear Mrs. Woolf calling Mr. MacNeice's *Autumn Journal* "feeble as poetry, but interesting as autobiography." It is a relief, too, to find her retracting her "fine view" in a later part of the essay, when she asks of the leaning-tower writers:

> Who can wonder if they have been incapable of giving us great poems, great plays, great novels? They had nothing settled to look at; nothing peaceful to remember; nothing certain to come.

That is probably going too far in the other direction. The thing which Mrs. Woolf does bring out is that the leaning-tower writers are in a false position, but the nature of the falseness is not very clear. If these writers had found the leaning tower comfortable, been pleased instead of angry with the builder, been effusively grateful for the fine view and the security, would they have been less, or more, false? Much of Mr. Auden's rhetoric is certainly false enough. But to get at the heart of that falseness, which Mrs. Woolf so acutely perceives, one imagines the leaning tower, as an illustration, would have to be abandoned altogether.

The core of Mr. Spender's argument in his essay, "Creative Imagination in the World To-day," is contained in his final remarks on Communism:

> Communism accepts the picture of collapse but sees in it a sign of hope. It outlines a revolutionary programme for the building of a new form of society. It thus both accepts despair and insists nevertheless that there is a future. At the same time it neglects metaphysical problems, and it attaches so great an importance to the day-to-day struggle that the sense of time beyond men's lives, and space stretching into infinite distances beyond humanity, is lost. All is concentrated on the provincial and momentary in this little corner of the universe. . . . It neglects every kind of truth outside of this phase of the inter-human struggle, especially the truth that nothing matters in the light of death or eternity.

But if this is what Communism does, what room does it leave for poetry? Mr. Spender replies that as "in politics the framework of action, programme and propaganda is everything," all that poetry can offer is "an awareness of life in its most naked form." He holds that this awareness is more necessary now than it has ever been before, because in our time a sense of life is the most difficult of things to maintain. To maintain it involves an act of "analysis and revelation and understanding," rather than an act of the will. Here Mr. Spender provides probably as good a criterion as could be found to distinguish propaganda from poetry. Propagandist poetry is essentially rhetorical, and rhetoric is an instrument of the will, not of the imagination. The rhetoric may consist in bringing out a simple contrast between the lives of the rich and the poor, as in many proletarian novels, or in exhorting or frightening the middle classes, as in some of Mr. Auden's poetry. This activity is no doubt useful, but it works in with a whole in which "the framework of action, programme and propaganda is everything"; it is not an act of analysis and revelation and understanding. No poetry or fiction can be both at the same time. Mr. Spender insists on the value of the second kind of activity, and coming from him that insistence is particularly significant.

This issue contains a number of excellent short stories, of which the most brilliant is Mr. V. S. Pritchett's "The Chesnut Tree," a little marvel of elliptical statement. Mr. B. L. Coombes' "Sabbath Night," an A.R.P. man's account of a raid in South Wales, is straightforward and vivid. Mr. Willy Goldman and Mr. Jim Phelan represent the Proletarian school, to whom knowledge of conditions tries to make up for style. Mr. C. Day Lewis has a fine poem, moving and beautifully articulated. There is some delightful Catherine-wheel imagery in Mr. Laurie Lee's three poems. In spite of the times, this is an unusually interesting number of *New Writing*, and one hopes that the editor and the publishers will be able to continue such a courageous venture.

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as curious about the habits of the hosts, particularly when human, as about those of their gate-crashers; the wriggling of a man under the microscope may be as fascinating as the wriggling of a thread of mycelium in a wheat-ear. It is his triple function—of scientist at work upon fungi, of novelist watching the workers upon fungi, and of social observer analysing the terrific strains produced by plant disease in the social organism—which really distinguishes Mr. Large and makes this book an unwieldy but very distinguished one. Narrowly considered, his task was to write a scientific history of plant disease. But there is nothing narrow about Mr. Large. He is the sort who rejoices in letting one thing lead powerfully to another. Ramshackledom lies in wait for a book conceived in this spirit, and Mr. Large's book but narrowly misses it, its virtues and its vices being most refreshingly those of excessive gusto, of abundance and superabundance.

These qualities seem to have governed Mr. Large's choice of 1845 as the date to start his history. A mere mycologist would surely have begun somewhat earlier, and Mr. Large involves himself in some little difficulty by having to double back to the eighteenth century later. But 1845 suits him exactly, for it presents him with just that pretty kettle of livestock which he loves to open and examine. About that time the Irish peasant, sucked white by his landlord, was emigrating if he could and dying if he could not because he had only potatoes to eat and in that year a powdery mildew had made a clean prior meal of them. An all-round view of the terrors and ironies of the Irish Potato Famine enables Mr. Large to get off with a flying start, as the following quotations, the first describing the Potato Blight and the second the Landlord Blight, will show:

> Normally, when no growth of the fungus was present, the moist and spongy tissue of the potato leaf manufactured food for the plant, and it had also a partial resemblance to a lung. It was bathed in air; with the help of sunlight it absorbed the gases which the plant needed from this air; and it gave off water vapour and other gaseous waste products of its living processes. It was evident that the spawn of the fungus, invading this tissue, would cause profound physiological disturbances. If a man could imagine his own plight, with growths of some weird and colourless seaweed issuing from his mouth and nostrils, from roots which were destroying and choking both his digestive system and his lungs, he would have a very crude and fabulous but perhaps instructive idea of the condition of a potato plant when its leaves were mouldy with botrytis infestans. . . .
>
> A parasite, by derivation, was one who supped at another's table. In Ireland in 1845 the table was the produce of the Irish soil, and the host was the population which raised that produce by its labour. The parasites were those who did nothing for their host but in their various ways supped on the rents, the votes, the rates, the profits, the usury, the taxes and the tithes. They constituted a complex and much ramified social organism growing within, and, in the case of absentee landlords, without, the body of Irish society. The juice, in its digested and fluid form, that this parasitic organism drew from the Irish population was money. In its undigested form it was the meat and the bread, the cattle, the pigs and the grain; while the share left for the host was the potatoes, a few rags and a little cheap whisky. . . .

But in other respects 1845 is a very significant date in the history of agriculture. It was then that Berkeley first raised the question which is fundamental to Mr. Large's history: was the Powdery Mildew the cause or the effect of the Potato Blight? Berkeley, maintaining that it was the cause, was correct, and it is the tremendous consequences of this answer, as they were painfully worked out in the following century, which lead Mr. Large's story through two vital campaigns, one in the field of practical agriculture and the other over the battlefields of biological science. In the first place man, having recognised at last that the fungi were mortal enemies of his chosen vegetable foods, moved lumberingly out to battle. The chiefs of staff in these campaigns were the mycologists, the brass hats were the men of Whitehall, the fighters were the stubborn, perplexed, slow changing farmers, the chemists and the fungicide producers. Three strategical plans were developed. The first was to kill the fungus while at work on the plant without killing the plant. The second and more subtle was to exterminate the fungus by preventing its leap from generation to generation of its host. The third and last resort, having failed to repel the invasion, was to render it innocuous by changing the plant in such a way that it ceased to provide a meal for the fungus while providing as good a meal as ever for man.

In the second place, Berkeley's hypothesis, as verified in rigorous detail by de Bary and many others, was to be a focal point in the great scientific controversy on the causation of disease in animals and plants. Mycologists, bacteriologists, chemists and physicists went for each other in the battle of the germs. It was demonstrated that while fungi do not eat the vitals of animals, bacteria and viruses, which do, eat also the vitals of plants. And as bacteria and viruses differ from fungi, not so much in their functions as in the scale on which they operate, Mr. Large's story swells to embrace them. The hunt proceeds through the vaccines and serums of Pasteur and his school, as they struggle to isolate one organism in a nutrient solution when a hundred different ones may cling to the point of a needle. It closes in on the viruses, beyond microscopic vision and hardly to be netted by the finest filter. And it ends, as usual, on a field strewn with philosophical *v.* scientific casualties, with the unanswered question: What is life?

But Mr. Large's main business is to describe the curious and complicated lives of the fungi and one may end by pointing out how well he does this. He has the knack, indispensable in good technical writing, of devising a simple mnemonic of his main problem. Lay readers in peril of being bogged in the complexities of the fungal reproductive system should hang on to a curious diagram, consisting of two osculating circles, which occurs again and again in these pages. This is a plan of the life history of any fungus. As each army of the fungi advanced, it was a thrilling problem in detection to run its life cycle to earth along these circles. To follow for instance the detective warfare against the most famous criminal of the fungi, the Rust of the Wheat, is to forget a nearer war.

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A GREAT NOVELIST

The Aftermath. Bks. XVII and XVIII of Men of Good Will. By JULES ROMAINS. Trans. by GERARD HOPKINS. *Peter Davies.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

It is easy to disparage M. Romains' enormous novel, and this has been done freely—chiefly by Frenchmen, in whom the sense of form and style is so much stronger than it is in the land of Dickens and Trollope. Like a whale, *Men of Good Will* makes an excellent target: it is open to anyone to aim darts at large areas marked Undistinguished Style, Indiscriminate Taste, Shapeless Sprawl, and so on. But meanwhile the whale pursues its way unhindered, sending up jet after jet of imaginative spume over year after year of European history. Dropping this simile before it becomes unmanageable, I should say that at no time since the death of Dickens have a novelist's readers awaited the next instalment of his work with such thrilled impatience. For M. Romains is the proud possessor of that rare thing, creative imagination, and his novel, with all its faults, simply teems with characters whose lives and thoughts are as real to us as those of people personally known. And what a gift for narrative! What a sense of humour (one has only to think of Haverkamp founding the swindlerious spa, or the dubious Romuald and Isabelle being shocked by the bohemian frankness of the Le Burec family, to laugh aloud)! What an astonishing discernment of those small details of dialogue, gesture and thought-forms which distinguish people living different sorts of life in different surroundings! M. Romains is at his ease in every kind of society, and though I should not wish to claim too much for him, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that his genius is of the same order as that of Balzac. Even at a lower estimate, he emerges by far the greatest novelist of the day.

After the grandiose poetry of the *Verdun* volume, a general lowering of the tone was inevitable and right. The immediate post-war years are material for satire and lyricism, but hardly for the solemn notes of the Great organ, as that enchanting pair of friends, Jallez and Jerphanion, are richly aware.

> Jerphanion deplores the fact that Europe to-day is the continent of Talleyrand and Metternich rather than of Beethoven and Hugo. I [Jallez] rather think that he is gilding the pill. There may be Talleyrands and Metternichs somewhere to-day, but Europe has slipped from their grasp. So far as I can see, the direction of affairs almost everywhere is in the hands of plumbers, scavengers . . . and a handful of failures from the ranks of the "intelligentsia."

Dipping his pen in lemon and soda, M. Romains draws a picture of the last-mentioned folk in an episode of astonishing virtuosity. In "Vorge *versus* Quinette" the good will which is the passacaglia on which the novel is constructed, disappears, so to speak, into the interior harmonies, leaving a theme which exploits to the utmost a macabre derision. It is a long time since we last caught more than a glimpse of the bookbinder-murderer Quinette; but it is one of the advantages of the Unanimist method that characters can be allowed to drop away from the surface of the narrative to fertilise and enrich the undersoil. Later on they rise again through the surface, having acquired meanwhile a whole accretion of hidden life and mental development. Thus in the long interval Quinette has become a mass-murderer, a hobby facilitated by his activities as police-spy during the war (this links him up, in the underground passages of our minds, with the narrative of *Verdun*). Women have been his speciality and it is his misfortune that Landru should have been working along the same lines. The trial of Landru and the resemblance between the two criminals' records brings Quinette to the edge of hysteria; but the point of the episode lies elsewhere. Claude Vorge, the Dadaïste poet, is the best satire on the surréaliste make-up I have yet come across. André Breton, Louis Aragon, René Crevel—even Alfred Jarry; these are some of the figures one recalls as one pursues the compulsive behaviour of this sinister buffoon. "You see, my dear chap [says his friend Fachuel, the magistrate] there's so much of the child and the woman in you—now don't get angry—you're a child in your inability, as a rule intentional, to measure the consequences of your acts . . . a woman, a gossiping woman, in the need you feel to chatter away regardless of what may happen." The muddle-headed young Diabolist (his poems are, as parodies, extremely ingenious and amusing) discovers Quinette, noses out his activities, and insists, to the murderer's dismay, on becoming his "disciple." Gradually, however, his charm begins to act on Quinette; the passage which analyses the poet's influence on the murderer is one of the subtlest in the book and shows how truly creative M. Romains' imagination is. The episode ends with a

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scene in which absurdity and disgust are superbly blended: in order to show Quinette (and himself) that his pretentions are real, Vorge attempts to strangle a woman—one of Quinette's customers—and to commit necrophily with her, but is foiled by the spontaneous revival of the corpse. The whole affair is richly humorous, but requires a cynical temper for its enjoyment and will probably shock a good many English readers.

The latter will, however, find abundant relief (as at the Grand Guignol) in the second episode, "The Sweets of Life." This is one of the most charming sections of the whole novel; the themes of "Childhood's Loves" and "The Humble" are blended in a beautifully tender way. Jallez, released by the end of the war, goes to stay in Nice and keeps a diary. This describes his love-affair with the little keeper of a newspaper kiosk, an emotionally innocent girl whose charm is wonderfully communicated. There are other strands, of course: a coterie of provincial intellectuals and a local bluestocking weave themselves through the romance of Antonia and Jallez; our old friend, Monsignor Mionnet, makes a sympathetic reappearance; we are reminded that Sampeyre, Laulerque and Co. are continuing their mysterious kidnapping activities in the Montagnes des Maures; and there is a rather pointless account of a day in the life of Francoise Maieul, a little girl new to the novel whom we may hope not to see again. But the kernel of the episode is a day spent up at Falicon by Antonia and Jallez—one of those days which we have all known and of which we say, "I shall never forget it"—a day in which everyone and everything conspire in our favour, when every step goes right, when every word and gesture finds its exact mark and balance, when every prospect pleases, and when the sense of youth and adventure and the purest love carry us on a wave of almost idiotic happiness. This experience, though common to all but the most devitalised persons, is one of the most difficult of all to describe, because it is both intense and elusive. Impossible to put one's finger on any one thing and say, "That was the cause of it all!" Here impressions are everything, life becomes a Monet or a Seurat; and only a poet, perhaps, can communicate the aggregate sensation. A scene here and there in *Dominique* and *Le Grand Meaulnes* are classic instances: but M. Romains is a poet, too, and he has done the trick: that chapter is unforgettable and leaves one with a sense of positive gratitude, for in describing his young people's happiness he has made us happy too. And so the purpose of art is achieved.

One cannot bear to think of this novel's ending. Safe in America, out of the clutches of the Germans and of the Vichy Government, M. Romains is, one hopes, preparing a further series of volumes.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

IRELAND, LAST CENTURY AND THIS

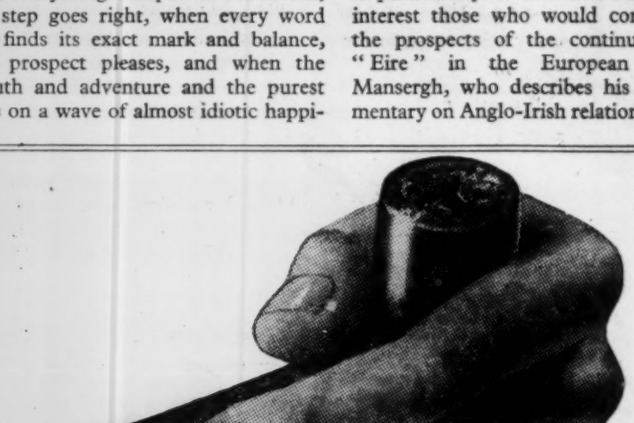
Ireland in the Age of Reform and Revolution. By NICHOLAS MANSERGH. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

The Irish Free State and its Senate. By DONAL O'SULLIVAN. *Faber.* 25s.

These two works, published at a time when the affairs and political history of Ireland may seem of small importance, are nevertheless of considerable historical value, and should—this is particularly true of Mr. Mansergh's book—interest those who would consider objectively the prospects of the continued neutrality of "Eire" in the European conflict. Mr. Mansergh, who describes his book as a commentary on Anglo-Irish relations and on political forces in Ireland from 1840 to 1921, starts off with an account of "The Irish Question" as seen by distinguished writers, statesmen and revolutionaries, mostly foreigners, in the nineteenth century. The Italians, Cavour and Mazzini, almost alone against prevailing continental opinion, adopted the English point of view, that Irish Nationalism, i.e., independence, was unthinkable and that the only duty of England was to see that Ireland was well and fairly governed. French observers, on the other hand—and as a rule these were Catholics, from Montclambert and de Beaumont to Paul Dubois—exploited the "Romanticism" of the Irish cause to the profit of their ingrained dislike of England, with a thought perhaps of tangible benefits from the dispute to be obtained for their country should France and England ever come to blows. Marx and Engels are the Germans whom Mr. Mansergh quotes, and to them even more than with the French, Ireland is mainly an object of interest as a thorn in the side of England, regarded as the chief obstacle to general social revolution. The interest of Marx and Engels in Ireland was not aroused by sympathy with Nationalist ideals, although Engels (who travelled in Ireland and fell in love with two Irish women) came nearer to the secret of the Irish than the French, when he wrote that "Ireland still remains the Holy Isle whose aspirations must on no account be mixed up with the struggles of the rest of the world." Ireland is really and truly neutral, and it is certain that she will continue to offer heroic resistance to all efforts to fuse her into a nation, a Commonwealth, a League of Nations or of Proletarians. Though consciously he may delight in cynical knavery, the Irishman's unconscious orientation is other-worldly and sentimental, the Englishman tries to make sentiment coincide with interest, the Irishman the converse. The Englishman persuades himself that he is thinking about the roses round the door, when he is really reposing comfortably in the thought of the policeman round the corner. The Irishman seems to be always thinking about his interest, and so he misled Karl Marx into imagining that he was the Achilles heel of capitalist England.

The chapters in which Mr. Mansergh discusses the attitude of English statesmen from 1880 onwards towards the "Irish Question" are mainly of academic and historical interest, but they show more clearly than has yet been done how gradually the idea of Partition came into the minds of British statesmen and how it was eventually forced upon them. A further point of topical interest dealt with in this book is that of the American attitude to Irish complaints against England. The power of the Irish in American politics, and their influence over the policy and actions of the United States during the last war, are fully and accurately set out. Whether the "Partition Question" has the same power to rouse Irish opinion in the U.S.A. to-day is another matter, and one which is not discussed by the author, for this is an historical commentary, in which opinions and propaganda are only conspicuous by their absence.

Mr. O'Sullivan's book is of quite a different order. Had he published it four years ago, before the abolition of the old Senate, of which he was Clerk during its fourteen years' existence, he would have made fine propaganda for that body and against Mr. De Valera's Government which destroyed it. That is not to suggest that this is not a scholarly work; it is, and one which will be frequently consulted by future historians. Taking the short view its general political criticisms are unanswerable. Yet the answer to them lies in the fact that the seemingly impossible has happened, and that Mr. De Valera, aided no doubt by world events, has reached a more impregnable position than any modern Irish leader. The original Senate



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of 1923–4, as Mr. O'Sullivan points out, contained a far larger number of members, not only of more distinction, but of positive and unusual characters, than is common in parliamentary bodies: for instance W. B. Yeats—whose famous speech on Divorce is described and misinterpreted—Sir Horace Plunkett, Colonel Moore, Alice Stopford Green and General Bryan Mahon. Moreover, it was the one place in the new Ireland where Irishmen, whatever their origin and former politics, did meet and attempt to efface the memory of old differences and recent wrongs. In the early days of the Free State it played an important part in public life, as a channel of communication between inexperienced Ministers and the leaders of finance and industry in Southern Ireland. Yeats has recorded his impression that the old bankers and business men in the Senate—and it was to this group that he attached himself—did a great part of the work of legislation at their private meetings. Gradually, however, the Senate became a refuge for party men rejected at the polls, until finally Mr. De Valera abolished it, not because he disbelieved in the bicameral system, but because it was a mere replica of a Dail elected before he had gained the majority.

J. M. HONE

PSYCHOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

The Analysis of Knowledge. By LEDGER WOOD. *George Allen and Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

Epistemology, once known by the less ugly name of Theory of Knowledge, is a part of philosophy that has been especially prominent in recent years. Metaphysics, now that the debunking spoon of logical positivism has skimmed away the surface scum, is not the intriguing mess it used to be: and this, combined with a curious lack of interest in ethics or political theory among the younger philosophers, has concentrated attention on the justification of knowledge and belief.

The modern positivists and phenomenalists owe their chief inspiration to Hume, the most significant, if not the most judicious, of writers in this field. It is apparent to anyone not taken in by the attractions of Hume's lucid style and naughty conclusions that his psychology is at fault. He takes the basic constituents of knowledge to be isolated and momentary impressions of sense and feeling, e.g., a patch of colour, a single sound, a single throb of pain. Professor Wood, while absorbing the positivism of recent writers, complains that their atomistic psychology, derived from Hume, vitiates much of their work. This complaint is justified. It is not, however, new.

Mr. Wood's main thesis is that perception, memory, thinking and all other ways of acquiring knowledge display a similar pattern in their operation. They consist of a "content" which is referred to an object, real or fictitious. This referential theory is again not new. Furthermore, Mr. Wood shows too great a zeal to force varied facts into a single form. After recognising that perceiving and thinking seem to operate quite differently, he says: "It is, however, more likely that a single epistemological pattern is repeated with appropriate modifications for each of the several types of cognition." No reason is given for assuming this. It is an aspect of the scientific bee in Mr. Wood's bonnet. He believes that the scientific procedure of finding general rules must be the right method for philosophy too.

The scientific bee is responsible for the insistence on psychology. Professor Wood claims to assist the solution of epistemological problems by combining epistemology with psychology. The philosopher's consideration of problems of perception must certainly be accompanied by sound psychology. But I doubt

On you alone this man depends

. . . he is the skipper of a mine-sweeper
and he is stretching out his hand to you
for your binoculars.
. . . so is a coast-defence watcher — an
A.A. gunner — a tank commander in
the desert.

* * *

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grows wider, the need for binoculars
grows larger and more urgent.
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at least twelve months to manufacture the
binoculars we need at this
very moment.
We must release these men for making
gun-sights and bomb-sights.
Every pair in the country
is needed — for that skipper — for some
fighting man.

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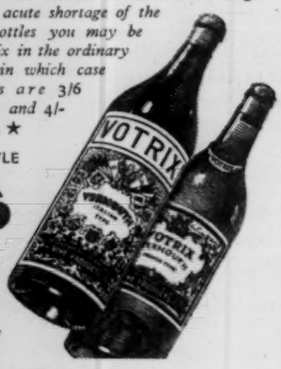

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whether it is Mr. Wood's psychology that helps him in the other parts of his subject. It is only in the first part of his book, in which he deals with perception and introspection, that psychology is at all prominent. The second half does not introduce any new considerations from psychology. Yet this is the more interesting half. The chapter on formal knowledge is the best in the book, especially the arguments against proving anything to be existent of necessity. It has been alleged in the past that pure logic proves the existence of, e.g., truth or the self, because it is self-contradictory to say "Truth does not exist" or "I do not exist." Professor Wood shows pretty conclusively that though such statements are rendered false by the implications of *asserting* them, they are not by themselves self-contradictory. But his argument, good as it is, is wholly dependent on logical acumen and not on any superior psychological technique. Those philosophers who would challenge his arguments would say he makes a false separation here of epistemology from psychology, the very fault of which he elsewhere accuses the "atomistic" philosophers.

Still, the psychology of the "atomists" does need correction, even if the correction is no new discovery. An English philosopher recently apologised for repeating the answer to an old fallacy by saying that all good fallacies are some time or other re-discovered in America and produced as new truths. It is at least satisfactory to see for once well-worn answers to equally well-worn mistakes being delivered with a reproving finger by an American professor to the thoughtless little boys of Cambridge. But what a pity that the sound philosophers must always be staid and stodgy, while the really exciting things and the good writing come from the mistaken hotheads. Mr. Wood's book, though in general sound, is written in a dull and cumbrous style. There is an unnecessary tendency to technical jargon. The more influential of the "atomists," such as Bertrand Russell and his followers, may use unsound psychology, but their language is usually simple, vigorous and, above all, comprehensible by any reader of fair intelligence. Mr. Wood's book could be read with profit only by people already familiar with the subject. D. RAFILOVITCH

THE POETS' PANTHEON

The Poems of Alice Meynell. *Oxford University Press.* 4s.

The poems of Alice Meynell have now been added to The Oxford Poets, and thus she becomes of the elect, safe for reading in High Schools, and for giving as a present to young relatives. The poems are printed in order of their appearance in book form during her lifetime. There are some more now collected for the first time, and five poems from an early manuscript book written during the poet's nineteenth and twenty-first years.

What is the general effect of this book, this neat body of verse? Has time been kind to it; can posterity agree with the enthusiasm with which Ruskin, W. E. Henley, and especially Coventry Patmore greeted the first appearance of her work?

I don't know an answer to that general question. I can speak only of my own pleasure, after knowing Alice Meynell's work for thirty years and coming to it now and again throughout that time. It is not possible to remain for long at a time, for her personality is a delicate one, and her poetic technique not robust. Between this cause and this effect, the interplay is sensitive, pious. A certain shyness, a virginal quality, attends and often screens the verse throughout her life. Time has not removed that screen. Conversation with this poet, therefore, is limited. Politeness, formality, even ceremony, are offered to the reader, and the reader responds in kind. You make no contact here, such as you make with Emily Brontë or Emily Dickinson; Mrs. Browning or Christina Rossetti. It is not the rarified air of the poet's life which stands in the way, for Emily Dickinson lived and breathed in such an air. It is not the religious symbolism, for Christina Rossetti had it. It is not the cultural allusion, for Mrs. Browning had that.

It is something more personal. If one calls it low vitality, the phrase is too coarse and misleading, for this verse is not lacking in ardour. Further, we know that throughout her life Alice Meynell slaved as a journalist, reared a family, and maintained a successful salon. But still that phrase persists in one's mind after rereading this body of verse and pondering over it. I find that rarely does she break through her shyness, her shadowiness, to verse stamped unmistakably in every line with a personal idiom and the right assertion of her five senses, an assertion in which no poet should be reticent. The few poems of such emphasis are famous, and to be found in most anthologies. But there, even these poems, her most robust work, are by comparison refined at once to a shy delicacy, a girlish ardour. *She was a shepherdness of sheep*, and as we watch those sheep going through the open gate of our imaginations, our appetites are lulled to sleep.

Behind this elusiveness, this shyness, however, lies a constant preoccupation. It is never vigorously or clearly defined, but it is so persistent that one may suspect a repression. Behind the ardour which Alice Meynell permitted herself, lurks the shadow of a more definite passion, a more organic contact with life and particularly with the medium of her art—words. Here she may permit extravagances in a professional way, a further self-revelation that could—if she were taxed by conscience—be immediately ascribed to the necessities of her literary medium.

That passion is welcome, for what artist can do much without it? Now that her poems are here together, we can trace its constancy, both in force and form. In one of the five juvenile poems, written in 1869, when she was twenty, she has a sub-title "The Poet to her Poet," and this sub-title is one which appears again and again throughout her work. Here is a stanza from the poem.

I alone shudder and moan to thy great things,
O wildly loved! and clasp they sufferings
With arms of music cast about thy wings.

Six years later she invokes him thus:

O Poet of the time to be,
My conqueror, I began for thee.
Enter into thy poet's pain,
And take the riches of the rain,
And make the perfect year for me.

Twenty-seven years later still, she sings:

So too, so too, do I confess
My poet when he sings.
He rushes on my mortal guess
With his immortal things.
I feel, I know, him. On I press—
He finds me 'twixt his wings.

This Leda and the swan symbol occurs, of course, in her famous sonnet with its last line, "I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart." It stamps her technique almost into monotonous devices, notably that one of repetition, which can be marvellously successful, as in

Home, home from the horizon far and clear,
Hither the soft wings sweep;
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near
The dovecote doors of sleep.

Oh, which are they that come through sweetest light
Of all these homing birds?
Which with the straightest and the swiftest flight?
Your words to me, your words!

It can also be ludicrous:

But those who slay
Are fathers. Theirs are armies. Death is theirs—
The death of innocences and despairs;

The dying of the golden and the grey.
The sentence when these speak it, has no Nay.
And she who slays is she who bears, who bears.

Overmuch could be made of all this. Better, perhaps, to leave Alice Meynell to sum up the nature and the quality of her own work, which she does with accuracy in the following sonnet.

A poet of one mood in all my lays,
Ranging all life to sing one only love,
Like a west wind across the world I move,
Sweeping my harp of floods mine own wild ways.
The countries change, but not the west-wind days
Which are my songs. My soft skies shine above,
And on all fields a flash of silver greys.

I make the whole world answer to my art
And sweet monotonous meanings. In your ears
I change not ever, bearing, for my part,
One thought that is the treasure of my years—
A small cloud full of rain upon my heart
And in mine arms, clasped, like a child in tears.

RICHARD CHURCH

CONTRA WAGNER

In Defence of Hanslick. By STEWART DEAS. *Williams and Norgate.* 5s.

Hanslick's merit as a critic is that he was the first to reveal the fallacies of Wagnerism. He it was who first told the world that Wagner's operas were not the dawn of a new era, but the sunset of the old, a shrewd estimate at the time which, as one might imagine, merely brought his name into ill-repute.

Mr. Deas does well to rehabilitate Hanslick at this juncture. For even now, more than half a century after *Parsifal*, we are still fuddling in awe of the Bayreuth deity, and no one, not even Debussy, nor Busoni, nor Stravinsky, has yet succeeded in breaking the dangerous Wagnerian spell. Mr. Deas has investigated the Hanslick literature very carefully (though he seems to have missed the important study by Schaefke) and the usual, latter-day picture of Hanslick as an ignoramus and charlatan is effectively disposed of. Yet the impression remains that he was not entirely free from the pedantry and prejudice of which his detractors also accused him and which Wagner, venomous as he sometimes was, personified in the character of Beckmesser (originally named Hans Lich).

As he emerges from this skilful little study, Hanslick was a strange combination of personal prejudice and keen perception. He had little love for Wagner, but not much more for Gluck. Nor was he much moved by Berlioz, nor by Bach and Handel. On the other hand, there are theories in his treatise on aesthetics, *The Beautiful in Music*, which Mr. Deas shows to be curiously prophetic of Clive Bell. Elsewhere he makes a fervent plea for subjective criticism, but he nearly always fails to convince through what is unforgivable in the type of critic he aspires to be, a coldly-calculated intellectual approach and a consequent appalling lack of enthusiasm. And so Hanslick's works are forgotten in the dusty galleries of libraries, save for his attacks on Wagner. Even here, he has hardly been the champion of anti-Wagnerism—he had not the stature for that role. But he did show originality in outlook, and sometimes foresight, qualities which are not easy to come by in music criticism and which it would be a pity to lose sight of. EDWARD LOCKSPEISER

Japan's Continental Adventure. By CHING-CHUN WANG. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

It isn't Dr. Ching-chun Wang's fault if reading his book makes one feel like the impatient child who asked its mother whether God was ever naughty. Since most books written on China in the last ten years have stressed the obvious justice of China's case, Dr. C. C. Wang would have improved his by discussing some of China's weak points. His chapters deal again with Japan's wanton aggression and violation of treaties; with the story of how China's Assembly met, passed Resolutions; how

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is neither Cheyney nor Runyon; but those who do not like quick-fire slang, thugs with tommy guns in night clubs, kidnappings and the like, would do well to keep away from it.

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the Japanese in Nanking raped, looted and killed at will; how, while the Japanese talked of setting up a new order in China, the Chinese Government grew stronger and the Chinese Army bigger and better disciplined and equipped than when the war began in July, 1937. But Dr. C. C. Wang does more than dwell on these familiar points. He was amongst those who appreciated the significance of his country's struggle as it developed, and this book consists mainly of articles and letters written when these events took place; they prove what an accurate prophet he was when he warned us all in an article in the *China Review* of October, 1932 (reprinted in this book) that "should the great Powers go back on their solemn promises and fail to do their part in restraining Japan's wanton invasion of a weaker neighbour, then other Powers with aggressive designs would be encouraged to follow Japan's example, and the calamity started in Manchuria would surely spread beyond the boundaries of China." Among these articles, which provide a valuable cross-section of Sino-Japanese affairs in the last ten years, the most interesting are those dealing with the Canton-Hankow Railway (the author was intimately connected with its building) and with the problem of Extra-territoriality, which will still have to be solved after the Japanese occupation of one-tenth of China is over. Two Appendices, one, the speech of General Chiang Kai-shek on July 17th, 1937, which has much historical interest, and the other, a description of Japanese rule in Korea by Owen Lattimore add a good deal to the value of the book.

Horizon, December, 1940. Edited by CYRIL CONNOLLY. 1s.

This is the twelfth number of *Horizon*, and ends a successful first year. That the Editor means, if possible, to do more with his second is made plain in the monthly comments, in which he sums up difficulties which have had to be met. Lack of support, he explains, means even more the failure of contributors to contribute than of the reading public to lay out their shillings. The Great have too often held back (here a black-list follows); those in uniform find, as Lord Beaverbrook once stated as an axiom for us all, that there is no room for culture in wartime; and between panic and apathy in general a magazine with the standards of *Horizon* has to struggle to make itself heard. To the outward eye, however, the new number shows small sign of these convulsions; indeed, it is one of the best Mr. Connolly has put together. W. R. Rodgers in "White Christmas" has written one of few kinds of Christmas poem that can be read to-day without incongruity, and is besides a sharp and skilful piece of writing in itself. Alfred Perlès' "Letter to Henry Miller," far less private than it sounds, gives a vivid impression of Londoners during the blitzkrieg as seen by a Czech in the Pioneer Corps. There are besides, a poem on Censorship by Arthur Waley; the first instalment of Peter Quennell's "Byron in Venice" and the last of Brian Howard's "Civilians at Bay" an analysis of our ruling class by George Orwell, the reporting, half-way between diary and story of the life of a land-girl, by Diana Gardner; an obituary note on Klee by Ruthven Todd. The price for this is less than anyone pays for a seat in a West-End cinema, which does not seem excessive.

Early Victorian Cambridge. By D. A. WINSTANLEY. *Cambridge University Press.* 25s.

The Vice-master of Trinity has here gathered into sixteen episodes the history of Cambridge University in the first sixty years of the last century. It was an eventful period beginning with the foundation of Downing's College as a symbol of the reforms which were badly enough needed. Discipline, curriculum and internal government had all to be rescued from the disarray into which they had fallen. This meant, in the conditions of a university of that time, a series of running battles between personalities conducted on a freely personal plane where the cantankerous, the spiteful, the dignified, the irascible, the lazy and the ambitious fought it out. Two episodes, the description of Cambridge as it was (with the bedmakers serving in hall in shawls and bonnets) and the election of Prince Albert (where the Royal private papers are for the first time used) give us glimpses of the entertainment which Mr. Winstanley might have afforded us if he had been inclined to write "off the record." But his intention is more serious and his work is consequently more of a specialist's book, of archæological, so to speak, rather than general interest. The lucidity of the writing and the skill which has brought so large a mass of material to so reasonable a proportion are both admirable; the complicated transactions over the two Commissions and the reigns of Christopher Wordsworth and Whewell are traced with a clarity and judgment for which students of the University's social history will always be grateful.

About Motoring

NIGHT VISION IN BLACK-OUT

THE problems of night vision during the black-out are severe for drivers who not only possess perfect daylight vision but also enjoy an even less common endowment, namely, excellent "cat eyes" or perfect night vision. Night driving in peacetime is complicated by the almost complete lack of orthochromatic accuracy in head-lamp rays, which render green turf indistinguishable from black tarmac and interpret vision very largely in terms of silhouette—i.e., black and white, or, more precisely, "light" and "dark" objects. In wartime night driving is further complicated by three special factors, viz., a shortened horizon (the regulation head lamp hardly carries further than fifty yards, whereas a first-class pair of standard peace head lamps will confer a range of half a mile), low vision (the war masked lamps cut off all rays at 3ft. above the ground line, so that only the nether limbs of pedestrians are illuminated), and, lastly, the very indifferent night vision from which many persons—and especially elderly persons—suffer. An individual may discover the defects of his night vision in several ways. If he is timid and helpless after dark he may merely be registering a protest against the conditions imposed by the pundits of the R.A.F. and assume that his nervousness is common to all motorists. But if other cars swoop past him confidently at speed, whilst he is feeling his way in considerable uncertainty as to where the road may be, or where his car may be in relation to the kerb, it is clear that his night vision is defective and he should take instant and energetic steps to bring it up to standard.

Before he assumes that the defect is physical and personal he should ascertain whether he is taking full advantage of the mechanical equipment which the regulations permit. First and foremost he should make sure that an ignorant garage has not fobbed him off with an imperfect make of head-lamp mask. One of the most popular and efficient masks is the Hartley; if his mask is not a Hartley, one or other of his friends is sure to use a Hartley, and he should make an early opportunity of comparing the Hartley with his own. If his is as good as the Hartley he may rest content with his equipment; if his is inferior he should buy a new mask at once.

Secondly, he should make sure that he is employing his mask to the best advantage. This implies fully charged batteries, a properly adjusted head lamp, the correct bulb in that head lamp, a spotlessly clean diffuser disc at the back of the mask, and, above all, a perfectly clear windscreen. Windscreens should be cleansed and polished before all night journeys, a little methylated or paraffin being mixed with the water used for cleansing. Moreover, the slight film of mist produced by condensation of warm breath on the inner surface of a windscreen on cold nights is not always particularly visible with war lighting. Its presence or absence can be verified by rubbing the finger on the glass. If such a film exists it can be destroyed or prevented by opening one of the front windows of the car, thus reducing the interior temperature to a figure near that of the open air and stopping further condensation.

Finally, he must cope with his own imperfect night vision. This is faulty with all of us when we emerge from a brightly lit room into outer darkness. The eyes adjust themselves to the

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CHRISTMAS 1940. We must make it a reality despite the war, for the festive spirit lives on.

Old people, distressed gentlewomen, poor families, air raid victims . . . they will all need Christmas Parcels and Christmas help.

Men and women of the Fighting Forces, thousands engaged on National Service . . . they, too, will welcome a share of Christmas good cheer.

Church Army workers will provide for the poor; Church Army Huts, Centres, Mobile Canteens, will be at work all over the country.

The task is a large one, but with your help, Christmas ***shall*** still be Christmas.

Cheques, postal orders, etc., should be sent to Preb. Carlile, C.H., D.D., 55 Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

★ *£5 will provide Ten Christmas Parcels for poor families, homeless people and other air-raid victims.*
★ *£10 will give "My Own Christmas Treat" to 120 old people or young children.*
★ *£5 will provide a Christmas Gift (chocolate, cigarettes, etc.) for 75 men of H.M. Forces.*

CHURCH ARMY

Christmas symbolises the dawning of Faith. For centuries past, at this period of the year, man has experienced Faith with an exaltation of spirit, with a sublime feeling of goodfellowship. The act of giving is the material expression of this goodwill. So let it be this year . . . But with less to give, be more discerning in your distribution. Think of the patients of The Royal Cancer Hospital, visited with a malignant disease that is among the most dreaded enemies of mankind, and send a Christmas gift, however small, to the Secy.

The Royal Cancer Hospital (FREE)

FULHAM RD., LONDON, S.W.3

Better blended Better smoke

CAPSTAN

In the National interest empty your packet at the time of purchase and leave it with your Tobacconist.

10 FOR 9d 20 FOR 1/5½

W. D. & H. O. WILLS, BRANCH OF THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO. (OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND) LTD. C.C. 6738

SHAPING THINGS TO COME

BEHIND the boom of guns and the scream of bombs, a quiet work of conciliation and Christian fellowship is being carried on by the Society of Friends through its Centres abroad.

This work does not attempt to move the masses, but aims rather at touching the hearts and lives of individual seekers. Many to-day are broken and disillusioned by political and economic failures. Through relief work, reconciliation work, and a sharing of the common task, Friends of various nationalities have built and are still building an international fellowship which nothing can destroy.

Quaker Centres may be found in:

DENMARK*	HOLLAND*	AFRICA
FRANCE*	SWITZERLAND*	CHINA & JAPAN
GERMANY*	SYRIA	INDIA

(*British personnel withdrawn, but work continued by local Friends in collaboration with American Friends.)

This work is the concern of all those who believe in a

DEMOCRACY BASED ON RESPECT FOR THE HUMAN PERSONALITY AND FREEDOM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPIRIT OF MAN.

Enquiries and contributions warmly welcomed and should be sent to

The General Secretary (Room A)
(Paul D. Sturge)

FRIENDS SERVICE COUNCIL

Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

gloom at various rates, but none of us should start the car promptly on emerging from the lighted house; a delay varying with the individual is necessary for the eye to accustom itself to the darkness—it will only be a couple of minutes at the slowest. Some of us see very poorly in the dark after such a delay, and this weakness of night vision is due to lack of a substance in the eye known as "visual purple," which in turn depends very largely on the presence or absence of Vitamin A in our constitution. Vitamin A can be taken very cheaply and tastelessly in the form of halibut-oil capsules, a fortnight's supply costing about half-a-crown. As the capsules at the worst are harmless, we may take a course of them without medical supervision, but any driver who is forced to conclude, after such a course, that his night vision is defective should certainly consult his medical man, who may be able to do something for him.

The perils of driving a fast projectile, weighing a ton or more, in the black-out are so obvious that no owner who feels helpless and confused in the black-out should continue to drive nightly without taking all the precautions set out in this article. R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 568

Set by George Thomas

You receive a book token. You must imagine that you are in turn each of the following (a) a low-brow undergraduate, (b) a middle-brow housewife, (c) a high-brow sclerotic general. In each of these characters you are asked to choose the two books your token would go to, and they must be books published in England during the last twelve months.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, December 30th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 565

Set by Joan Mair

The usual prizes are offered for the best extracts from a conversation in a public air-raid shelter between one character from either Fielding, Jane Austen, Trollope or Peacock, and another character from either Charles Morgan, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, or James Hadley Chase. Entries should be limited to 250 words.

Report by Joan Mair

I think it was Addison who replied, when a lady complained that he took little part in conversation, "Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds." I am afraid that few of these competitors could draw for more than 7¾*d.*, for their entries were decidedly disappointing, and, even with a ready-made subject for conversation, seemed extraordinarily lacking in imagination, colour or wit.

I am sorry that no one attempted a character from Trollope. I had looked forward to reading some spirited back-chat between Archdeacon Grantley and Miss Blandish, perhaps, too, Lady Dumbello might have met Lady Chatterley under the Savoy. Jane Austen and Charles Morgan were the most popular authors. I liked Charles Furbank's Mr. Woodhouse (in conversation with a Lawrentian miner):

"Really, young men are not at all the thing nowadays, they are continually leaving doors open or dropping bombs on people."

"I'd wager thee often wets thy breeks wi' worrying," said the young man to whom he spoke. "Oh, dear me! The vulgar fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Woodhouse. . . .

"I wish one might land due on us and blow me right into t' rock face" . . . but the rest of the conversation is not so amusing.

F. Francelli's Sparkenbroke *v.* Miss Darcy was delightful Morgan but unconvincing Austen:

Miss D.: Personally, I find nothing quite so unpardonable in the lower classes as their blatant lack of enthusiasm for life.

S.: Perhaps you have not yet come to appreciate Marvell's "magnanimous despair"?

Miss D.: No, indeed! And it is a privilege I will readily forgo.

S.: Coleridge said all men were born either Aristotelians or Platonists. To which do you incline?

Miss D.: To disagree with Coleridge . . ." and so on.

Miss Blandish and John Thorpe (*Northanger Abbey*) are more realistic, but unfortunately N. Bodington has made his entry in narrative rather than conversational form.

Here are the winning entries.

FIRST PRIZE

Rev. Dr. Folliot (Crotchet Castle—PEACOCK)
Louis (The Waves—VIRGINIA WOOLF)

Dr. F.: I perceive, Sir, by the NEW STATESMAN you carry, that you are a Rationalist. Disagreement seasons discourse, and discourse alleviates the cravings of a frustrated palate. I count it fortunate to share with you this confinement in a cellar unhappily containing no wine.

Louis: This incessant overhead hum as of bees whose loins have substituted destruction for impollination bewilders my thoughts, rendering abstractions unintelligible.

Dr. F.: Driving us to the shelter of the concrete. Happily I come provided with a flask of excellent Chablis. A glass with you.

Louis: I drink to recapture the life I knew, escaping me at the sound of a siren. Its fluctuant ululation suspends familiarity; at its call, my friends vanish. Neville and Bernard are in the A.R.P.; Susan, her fingers deft about the tea-urn, presides over a canteen; Rhoda is in the A.T.S.; Jenny (appropriately) is a Wren. I remain, studying in the mirror the greying hairs about my temples, the little fleck of shaving soap, the right eyelid looselier folded than the left. The siren stops; I am here, chill and subterranean; the seat I sit upon is irregular and slatted, the only mirror is the *Daily Mirror* I pick up from the damp floor between finger and thumb.

There is little comfort in this wine; there is no truth in this mirror.

Dr. F.: In vino veritas, sir. Likewise *in speculo vanitas*. These are infallible axioms—yet a third I fear to be a desideratum merely.

Louis: And that is—?

Dr. F.: In refugio sanitas. R. C. MASON

SECOND PRIZE

NO LIVING FOR THE REVEREND

By Jane Hadley Chase

Eddie: Quit shoving. What do you think you are—a wave?

Mr. Collins: In more spacious circumstances I should say "how do you do?"

Eddie: How do I do what?

Collins: My dear sir, though I have sought to be civil, believe me, I also regret our proximity.

Eddie: Rest your munchers, gran'pop; or I'll beat your neck with a rake.

Collins: Sir, had my Lady Catherine de Burgh not herself told me that in these times one must bear all hardships cheerfully, I should call an officer of the law.

Eddie: Do you like life?

Collins: I shall answer your question, not your tone. Yes! life is indeed precious, and in wartime I have come to realise that God (who gave us this life) meant us not to waste it. We must fight for what we know to be right!

Eddie: So God's British?

Collins: He looks equally on all men, but His just aid is with us. He keeps our island free.

Eddie: You dribble like the March of Time.

Collins: Thank you.

Eddie: But just suppose God likes Jerries: suppose they all put on Jesus-boots and walked across your Channel! You'd look pretty soft!

Collins: Sir, you take His name in vain.

Eddie: I take nothing I can't keep. And see here, I don't like the way you breathe. Just shut up, or I'll give you a slap in the snitch 'll make you look like a Yid.

Collins: Lady Catherine has always said the lower classes were offensive.

Eddie: Say that again, and I'll bounce marbles on your eyeballs!

Collins: All I ask of you is silence.

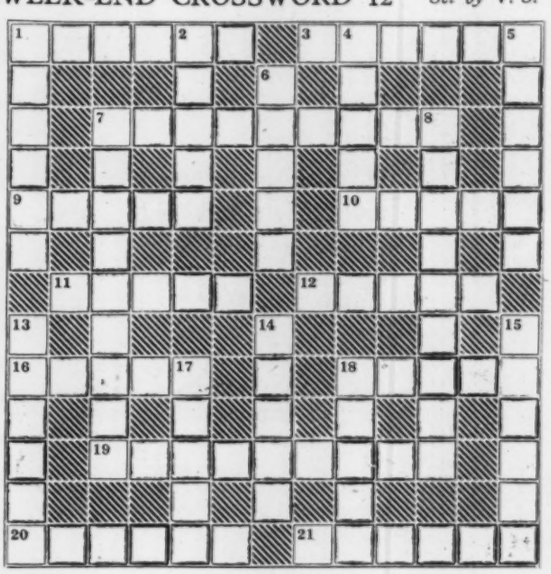
Eddie: You'll get it.

(GUNSHOT—CURTAIN) G. M. WILSON

Will "Gragge," prize-winner in Competition No. 563, please send his address?

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 12

Set by V. S.



No correct solution was received to last week's Crossword.

ACROSS

1. Say, is donkey-work at a premium? (6)
3. Sir Edwin Lutyens wants 11*s.* for a specimen. (6)
7. Sin and Son. (6 and 3)
9. A doctor in liquor. (5)
10. *rev.* Provides accommodation for mother and child. (5)
11. Correct for the troops in these times. (5)
12. "New Writing"? (5)
16. Out of range. (5)
18. Children can hardly stand such pleasure. (5)
19. What's the mortal hurry? (5 hyphen 4)
20. A little Whiggish. (6)
21. *Daily Worker* On Character of Last Row In Greece. (6)

DOWN

1. A Dame but not of the British Empire. (6)
2. The Academy has an enigma hanging in its Show. (5)
4. The hopper that Mrs. Hood had. (5)
5. May be open if Mr. Weller wants to look around. (6)
6. On either side of one. (5)
7. Put an end to a thousand old folk. (9)
8. Last and first of women. (9)
13. The ruddy horse turned turtle like a bird. (6)
14. Graduate the dip. (5)
15. Street artist in song. (6)
17. Short notice in some cases, so one's informed. (5)
18. Take up art on the quiet! (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

INVESTORS' ABSTENTION FROM CONSUMPTION—DOLLAR REQUISITIONING—OIL SHARES

A FIRM of stockbrokers, instead of sending a Christmas card to their clients, writes a letter urging them to abstain from consumption as far as possible and to invest the savings so created in War Bonds. This is very patriotic. I will quote from their letter:

> The way is therefore open to every one of us to make a vital contribution to the finance of the war. For once the shabby coat, the old hat, the forgone pleasure have become the hall-mark of patriotism. In the past such action has been deplored on account of its deflationary effect upon trade, but now the labour so released by our parsimony is urgently and increasingly needed for the war effort. It is, of course, the Government's duty to organise the transfer of labour from the production of civilian goods to that of war goods, but we civilians can make the first move by abstention from consumption.

I would have stressed the Government's duty before the civilian's duty. If the Government is foolish enough to allow manufacturers of cloth or tailors to make the new coat or the new hat which we do not buy, the last state will be worse than the first. It is better to control production at source than consumption at the bottom. But the brokers are right in impressing upon their clients their duty to be stingy. As I am often asked whether it is any advantage to the Government if old holdings are sold and the proceeds re-invested in the new War Loans, I will again reply that no advantage accrues unless the buyers of the stocks or shares you sell are investing money realised from new savings. And this you will never know. As these brokers say, it is only by the creation of *new* savings, that is, by the act of reducing our consumption that we are really contributing to the prosecution of the war.

* * *

The new list of 66 dollar shares to be requisitioned by the Treasury contains such "big names" as Continental Can, Eastman Kodak, General Motors, Pennsylvania Railroad, Sears Roebuck, Socony-Vacuum Oil, U.S. Steel and Woolworth common shares and many utility preferred shares which are widely held in this country. A guess at the total size is over £100 millions' worth. We are eating up our realisable capital resources in the United States at a great speed. Personally, I have great sympathy with those investors whose capital is being converted forcibly into sterling. They did nothing unpatriotic in acquiring these dollar shares, and in many cases they bought them at much higher prices (even allowing for the present dollar premium), so that the Treasury is in effect forcing them to capitalise a loss. They have no chance to recover that loss by buying, as they are being urged to do, Government War Bonds with the sterling proceeds. As between one capitalist and another, this dollar requisitioning has an unfair incidence. It is poor consolation (except to jobbers) to restore the London market in the few remaining dollar or foreign securities which were recently frozen, such as International Nickel, Canadian Pacific, Brazilian Traction. There is not much to be gained by British residents exchanging these shares with one another, but if any investor wishes to improve income I would call attention to the $100 shares of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, which can be bought at about £29. On the basis of dividends of $8 per share, they return a yield of £4 13s. per cent., but as tax is deducted at 2s. 9½d. the adjusted gross yield works out at about 6 per cent. The shares are fully paid but there is a nominal reserve liability of $75 per share. In a territory remote from bombs, this is not a great bogy.

* * *

Fireworks for the Stock Exchange on the great news from North Africa were provided by the oil share market. Anglo-Iranian, which were only 27s. 6d. on December 4th, had risen to 42s. 6d. by December 16th. Shell Transport in the same period rose from 1⅝ to 1⅜, and Burmah Oil from 2⅝ to 2⅛. If income is important, I still think that an exchange from Shell Transport, which may be dividendless this year, into Burmah Oil, which should pay 12½ per cent., is advisable. Ultimately the European business of Shell Transport will return, for Europe is too small an oil producer to live without oil from the international distributors, but I cannot see Shell Transport shares remaining at around 40s. if the dividend is passed in May. As for Anglo-Iranian, it has not lost so much in Europe as Shell; it has not so great a need to conserve cash as Shell; and the operations in North Africa and the Balkans will increase the military consumption of its petrol and fuel oil. It may, therefore, repeat its 1939 dividend of 5 per cent. But at over 40s. the ordinary shares already discount better prospects, and I suggest an exchange into Anglo-Iranian 8 per cent. and 9 per cent. preference shares:

			Yield £ s. d.	1940 High	1940 Low
8% preference	(first) ...	26/–	£6 2 6	32/–	19/–
9% "	(second) ...	25/9	£7 0 0	32/9	18/9

In order to return a yield of £6 2s. 6d. per cent. these ordinary shares at 40s. would have to pay a dividend of over 12 per cent., and to return 7 per cent. they would have to pay 14 per cent. But I will be surprised if they pay more than 5 per cent.

Young Bill had a practice unique
He would shave only once in a wique
Till JIF came his way
Now he shaves every day
And his chiques are quite slique so to spique
Jif
Men find Jif Shaving Cream makes the daily shave really pleasant and refreshing. It is quick, comfortable, soothing, convenient and works up a copious lather. It is made by Pears.
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FITTLEWORTH, Sussex. Fortrie Guest House. Comfort. Breakfast in bed if desired. 'Phone: 61.

ROCKINGHAM, Westward Ho! Devon. Quiet, comf. hse. peaceful sur. Mod. inc. terms. MISS FOLL. Northam 183.

EDINBURGH. Manor Hotel, 50 Manor Place. Terms from 13s. 6d. per day. Reduction per week. Tel.: 228191.

WOODY-BAY HOTEL, Parracombe, N. Devon. Quiet, peaceful, safe area. H. & C. all rooms, spring mattresses. good food, farm produce, central heating, licensed. From 3½ guineas inclusive. Parracombe 64.

CHRISTMAS in comfort at WHITE LODGE HOTEL, Saltdean, Sussex. (Rottingdean 9614.)

BLENHEIM, Bovey Tracey, S. Devon. Lovely gardens, orchards. Central heating and H. and C. in bedrooms.

W. SUSSEX. Christmas and after at Thatched Eaves, Bignor, Pulborough. Attractive modernised house. Downs. Quiet. ALLUM (Sutton 229).

VACANCIES for children 7–10, needing home care and education. Four acres and woodland, Health and Freedom in happy home with own children. Home Farm produce, no sirens. MRS. O. F. JARKS, Quince House, Bishop Nympton, N. Devon, or telephone Museum 6993.

RESPITE AND RECREATION
Make the most of your holidays this year by staying at Langdale Estate. Unique and varied accommodation amidst delightful surroundings. Furnished cottages, guest house and the new Pillar Hotel. Tennis and squash courts, swimming pool, etc. Illustrated booklet on request. The Manager, Langdale Estate, Great Langdale, near Ambleside. Tel.: Grasmere 82.

WELL-APP. boarding house in Hampstead has vacancies; h. and c., gas-fires, rings; meals (English, Continental and dietetic) optional. MAI. 6916.

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GRD. flr. lge. dble. individually appointed room, opening gdn. (shelter), kitchen, 17s. 6d. Or as flat. Priv. hse. Pri. 0878.

STAFF and twelve girl students require unfurnished country house, safe area, or would consider share with school or private owner having surplus accommodation. Box 8341.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
Rates and all information on page 668

The Family Physician

THE PAIN SIMPLY VANISHED

That's what many of my patients say to me, after taking the Phensic tablets I have prescribed for them.

Nervous headache—backache—neuritis—neuralgia—rheumatic pains—they say Phensic seems to go right to the root of the pain and soothe it away.

This power of Phensic to "make the pain go" so quickly is partly explained by the rapidity with which Phensic is absorbed into the blood and partly because four ingredients, not just one, make up the Phensic formula.

These four ingredients work together to attain the desired results—and every one of them works better for working with the other three. Yes! It is a medical triumph. No one would deny it.

A celebrated surgeon, concerned with relieving pain and weakness after operations, says he is profoundly convinced of the pain-killing, fever-reducing qualities of Phensic.

However delicate you may be, Phensic will do you no harm. It does not harm the heart. It does not upset the stomach. It does not leave the patient depressed.

Two tablets will bring you soothing comfort from jangled nerves. They will refresh and hearten you when you feel over-tired. Every chemist has Phensic brand. It will cost you 3½d, 7d, 1/5, 3/5 & 5/8 (*Inc. Purchase Tax*).